



















John Jay  
New York.



# THE HISTORY OF CO-OPERATION

BY

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"SIXTY YEARS OF AN AGITATOR'S LIFE," "BYGONES  
WORTH REMEMBERING," ETC.

REVISED AND COMPLETED

It is not co-operation where a few persons join for the purpose of making a profit from cheap purchases, by which only a portion of them benefit. Co-operation is where the whole of the produce is divided. What is wanted is, that the whole of the working class should partake of the profits of labour.—JOHN STUART MILL

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To

THE RT. HON. JOHN BRIGHT, M.P.,

WHOSE TOWNSMEN OF ROCHDALE

MADE CO-OPERATION A SOCIAL FORCE,

AND WHO IS HIMSELF

A FRIEND OF EQUITY IN INDUSTRY,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED

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JOHN BRIGHT . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
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## NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

1. The portrait of John Bright is a reduction of the large photograph taken of him by Mayall, now in the possession of James Charlton, of Chicago. It was the largest photograph which had then been taken, and was nearly life-size. It represents Bright as he appeared in the House of Commons when the cry went through the lobbies, "Bright is up!"

2. The portrait of Walter Morrison is animated by that pleasant expression of encouragement, which we all knew, when Co-operation was making itself a force in industry.



## CHAPTER XXII

CO-OPERATIVE WORKSHOPS <sup>1</sup>

*"Chi ha un compagno ha un padrone."*—ITALIAN PROVERB.  
 ("He who has a partner has a master.")

INDUSTRIAL Co-operation includes not merely union for strength, but union for participation in the profits made in concert, but the theory has not always been applied consistently to the workshop.

In a store the purchasers share the total profits. In a proper productive society, after the payment of all expenses of wages, of capital, material, rent, education, and reserve fund—the total profits are divisible among the thinkers and workers who have made them, according to the value of their labour estimated by their respective salaries, and to customers according to their purchases.

The members of manufacturing societies in some cases prove themselves wanting in patience and generosity towards their comrades. The smarter sort, perceiving that a successful trade may speedily produce large profits, prefer converting the co-operative affair into a joint-stock one, and keeping the gains in their own hands, taking their chance of hiring labour like other employers. Thus, instead of the mastership of two or three, they introduce the system of a hundred masters.<sup>2</sup> They multiply organisations for individuals, and enlarge the field of strikes, and prepare new ground for contests between capital and labour.

<sup>1</sup> This chapter treats the workshop as a co-operative company in which labour hires capital, devises its own arrangements, and works for its own hand.

<sup>2</sup> See "Perils of Co-operation—the Hundred Master System," contributed by the present writer to the *Morning Star* newspaper.

The theory of a co-operative workshop is this. Workmen provide all the capital they can as security to capitalists from whom they may need to borrow more, if their own is insufficient. Nobody is very anxious to lend money to those who have none: and if any do lend it, they seek a higher interest than otherwise they would. The workmen hire, or buy, or build their premises; engage whatever officers they require, at the ordinary salaries such persons can command in the market. Every workman employed is paid wages in the same way. The interest on the capital they borrow, and that subscribed by their own members for rent, materials, wages, business outlays of all kinds, for reserve fund, for depreciation, for education, are the annual costs of their undertaking. All gain beyond that is profit, which is divided among all officers, workmen, and customers. Thus in lucky years when 20 per cent. profit is made a manager whose salary is £500 gets £100 additional—a workman whose wages are £100 a year takes £20 profit, in addition to the interest paid him for his proportion of capital in the concern. There is no second division of profit on capital—the workers take all surplus, and thus the highest exertions of those who by labour, of brain or hand, create the profit are secured, because they reap all the advantage.

The workman has of course to understand that a co-operative workshop is a Labour co-partnery, and to take note of the Italian proverb that “he who has a partner has a master.” He knows it is true when he takes a wife, and if he does not consult in a reasonable way the interests of home, things soon go wrong there. And so it will be in the workshop. All his fellows are partners, all have a right to his best services, and he has a right to theirs, and he who neglects his duties or relaxes his care, or skill, or exertions, or makes waste, or loss, or shows neglect, or connives at it, is a traitor and ought to be put out of the concern.

There has been confusion caused by there being no clear conception of the place of capital, which has been allowed to steal like the serpent of Eden from the outer world into the garden of partnership, where, like the glistening intruder of old, it has brought workmen to a knowledge of good and evil—chiefly evil: and times beyond number the serpent of

capital has caused the original inhabitants to be turned out of Eden altogether. Hence has come discouragement to others, and that uncertainty which rob enterprises of their native fire and purpose.

Co-operation has a principle which is distinctive, and those who ignore it have no right to the distinctive name of co-operators, and are trading under a false name. Labour Co-partnership demands that the worker shall put his skill and character into his work and shall be secured an equitable share of the profits. The joint-stock system uses the labourer, but does not recognise him. At best it invites him to join the capitalist class as a shareholder, in which case he looks for profit, not from his labour, but from the labour of others. Under the joint-stock plan labour is still a hired instrument—labour is still dependent, without dignity, because without rights.

The condition of the working tailors of the metropolis, then 23,000 in number, appeared, from the description in the *Morning Chronicle*, to be so deplorable and so unjust, that several gentlemen, with Prof. Maurice, Mr. E. V. Neale, Canon Kingsley, J. M. Ludlow, and Thomas Hughes, attempted to rescue them from such wretchedness, and, if possible, supersede the slop-sellers. For this purpose they subscribed £300, rented some suitable premises, and fairly started in business a body of operative tailors, numbering some thirty, under the management of a person who was a tailor and a Chartist. The manager was absolute master until the Association repaid the capital advanced to it. He received a salary of £2 a week, the other members worked by the piece, according to a fixed tariff of prices. All work was done on the premises. Interest at the rate of 4 per cent. only was paid on the capital lent. One-third of the net profits was by common agreement devoted to the extension of the Association, the remainder was to be divided among the workmen in the ratio of their earnings, or otherwise applied to their common benefit. The plan was fairly co-operative. Here capital took a very moderate interest for its risk. The manager "went wrong." A manager of energy, good faith, and good capacity might have made an industrial mark under these well-devised conditions.

Printers, who are the wisest of workmen, as a rule, are not yet infallible in co-operation. The Manchester Co-operative Printing Society has this rule for the distribution of profits. "The net profits of all business carried on by the society, after paying for or providing for expenses of management, interest on loan capital, and 10 per cent. per annum for depreciation of fixed stock and buildings, and paying  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.<sup>1</sup> per annum (should the profits permit) on paid-up share capital, shall be divided into three equal parts, viz., *one to capital, one to labour, and one to the customer.*" Were the capital all supplied by the workers the double profit to capital would come to them. But in this society none are shareholders, and therefore labour works to pay capital twice before it gets paid once. Yet this society is in advance of "co-operative" productive societies, as that of Mitchell Hey, for instance, at Rochdale, which gives nothing to labour. Mitchell Hey, however, does admit individual shareholders, giving them profit on their capital, but not on their labour. In the Manchester Printing Society the capital is subscribed by stores, and individual members have no opportunity of investing in it. But in proper co-operative societies where capital is simply a charge, and paid separately, and paid only once—the division of the profits in proportion of two-thirds to labour, and one-third to custom, gives labour a large interest and a fair chance.

Among the higher class of masters a responsible servant is adequately provided for; they give a salary which secures the whole of his interest and powers, and they commonly tolerate his prosperity so long as they are well served. The working class are apt to fix all salaries at the workshop rate, and begrudge every sixpence over that. For a man's brains, devotion, interest, and experience, they award nothing willingly, and make it so humiliating to receive anything extra, that he who does so eventually accepts employment elsewhere.

Workmen who have known want, who have risen from small beginnings, through struggles and privations, are pecuniarily timid. They are always afraid their means will

<sup>1</sup> The effect of the high interest they have to pay is that the printers get only sixpence in the £ on their wages.



fail them. Workmen who have risen from nothing may like to see others rise, but they expect and rather like to see them rise through the same process. Working-class masters should set an example to other employers. It is only a liberal frame of mind among men that can make a co-operative workshop possible.

Sometimes a committee of a co-operative society find open government more troublesome than secret. Sometimes their manager would be able to show them that great advantages had been obtained if he was not fettered by the obligation of explaining how he acquired them. As a rule persons will do things in secret which they would never think of doing openly. In a co-operative productive society in London, it transpired that a person in the office was paid by a private firm to give it timely notice of all estimates of tender sent by the co-operators. It came to pass continually that a lesser tender was made by the rival firm, and the co-operators lost the work. Had the private firm been co-operative and the workmen been acquainted with this treachery it could not have succeeded long, and probably would not have been attempted. A co-operative society would seldom be got to vote secret service money for unknown application. The publicity which co-operative policy implies and compels is one of its beneficial influences in the conduct of trade. Honesty is a fetter, but it is a noble obligation. The secrecy and promptitude of individual action is often the source of honest profit. Responsible directors are delegated considerable power. This is practically acting as private firms do, with this difference, that in Co-operation nothing can be done which those who do it, do not feel themselves able to explain and justify to the whole society at the proper time. This is a restriction upon enterprise as understood in the competitive world. But it tells in favour of the morality of trade. We have seen at repeated Congresses directors of the Wholesale Society complain of the publicity of criticism brought to bear upon their proceedings. At the Annual Congress criticisms arise upon the officers of the Central Board, upon the character of the investments of the Wholesale Banking Department, and of the sufficiency of the reserve fund which many consider ought to be provided for the security of the Bank. The equality of

members, the appointment of all officers by representative election, the eligibility of all members to the highest offices when their fitness is discerned by the society, are essential features recognised in the constructive period. It is intended that all members shall acquire the capacity of conducting their own affairs. Co-operative workshops are the great means by which hired labour can be superseded.

Writers of business experience and commercial authority give useful suggestions to working men. Here is a passage: "The extensive trial of the system of co-operation in its different forms would tend to the correction of the present exaggerated ideas of the working classes respecting the profits of employers, and their disposition to under-estimate the value of the contribution of capital and skill which these furnish. Experience would show them that losses are frequent and inevitable, that it is easy to lose money and difficult to make it, and that the rate of net profit is not, in cases of only ordinary good management, very high. They would learn that the employer . . . contributes to the process of production, an element of intellectual labour, on which the efficiency of their manual labour depends."<sup>1</sup>

Manchester Commissioners, who visited the Emperor Napoleon respecting the Cobden Treaty, explained that the average profit of the cotton trade was  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the capital employed. And the balance sheets of the Cotton Spinning Companies of the Oldham District, Dr. Watts says, confirm the statement. The best known of the modern crowd of Spinning Mills which have sprung up in Oldham is the Sun Mill, which commenced in 1861. It originated with the co-operators, members of the Distributive stores there, conjointly with a few trade unionists, with a share capital of £50,000 and a loan capital of a similar amount. They soon set 80,000 spindles to work. In 1874 their share capital amounted to £75,000, the whole of which, within £200, was subscribed. In addition to this, it has a loan capital of £75,000. The entire plant may be estimated at £123,000. The mill has always been depreciated  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. per annum, and the machinery at  $7\frac{1}{2}$ . The total amount allowed for depreciation during the first ten years of the company's existence has been

<sup>1</sup> Charles Morrison, "Labour and Capital," pp. 134-5.

£32,000. The profits declared have been very large, varying from 2 to 40 per cent. Most of the Oldham mills have declared a rate of profit which seems very high. But as their loan capital is large and is paid only 5 per cent., the high profits are counted from dividends paid upon the share capital alone.

It has been ostentatiously held that Distributive stores could never succeed without one absolute directing mind. Yet numbers of stores have been successfully conducted by directors, chosen in what appeared to be the worst manner—that of public election—where those who made the most speeches got the most votes. Yet it has come about that men of business faculty are generally brought to the front. Now the same objectors say, this plan may do well for such a simple affair as distribution, but in productive manufactures nothing can be done without the presiding and commanding mind. Distribution is not at all a simple affair; a few errors will suffice to ruin a store of ten thousand members, and it requires great capacity to plan distribution on a large scale, to watch at once the fluctuations of a hundred markets and consult the personal tastes and interest of a million families, as now has to be done. Joint-stock companies are successfully conducted by working men, who surmount the difficulties of manufacturing management heretofore declared to be insurmountable. Sometimes employers who establish partnerships of industry will be discouraged by the apathy and selfishness of their men, who will be willing to take profits without exerting themselves to create them. Sometimes men will be discouraged and deprived of advantages they are entitled to have, by impatience or injustice on the part of employers. But new experiments increase, and the number which succeed increase.

The commercial sentiment of Co-operation is not philanthropy but equity. Charity is always a grace in business men, but many persons would be glad to see it eliminated. The demand of people of spirit and insight is justice, not charity: for if justice were oftener done there would be less need of charity to redress inequality of condition.

Good-will is a virtue. Masters may show it to servants, the rich to the poor—but masters do not use it towards one another; the rich do not ask for the good-will of the poor. They prefer not to require it. It is not wanted between equals.

Courtesy, cordiality, deference, and respect are the virtues of intercourse. Co-operation seeks to supersede good-will by establishing good conditions which establish it in practice.

The names of Mr. Slaney's Committee of 1850 which first inquired into the laws affecting the finances of the industrial classes deserves recording.

The Select Committee originally consisted of the following members: Mr. Slaney, Mr. John Abel Smith, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Cardwell, Mr. Greene, Mr. Ewart, Lord James Stuart, Mr. Wilson-Patten, Lord Nugent, Mr. Stafford, Sir R. Ferguson, Mr. Littleton, Mr. J. Ellis, and Mr. Frederick Peel; to whom Mr. Heald and Mr. Stansfeld were added in place of Mr. Wilson-Patten and Mr. Stafford. Mr. John Stuart Mill gave evidence on this Committee. In speaking of the remuneration of capital, and the mistaken notions which he believed to prevail among the working classes in regard to it, Mr. Mill dwelt upon "the extravagant proportion of the whole produce which goes now to mere distributors," as at the bottom of the greater part of the complaints made by the workers against their employers. In answer to the question whether this evil would not cure itself by competition among the distributors, Mr. Mill replied that "he believed the effect of competition would be rather to alter the distribution of the share among the class who now get it, than to reduce the amount so distributed among them." But no one dreamt that large bodies of working men would arise who would combine to use the savings on their own consumption, not to employ themselves, but to employ other working men to work for them, that they might put the profits in their own pockets.<sup>1</sup> This has been done in Oldham with fervour. In the fertile field of Oldham co-operative production is unknown. Mr. William Nuttall, a man of ability and energy as an industrial agitator, developed quite a passion for joint-stock companies there.

In Oldham, joint-stock companies do not give workmen, as workmen, a chance. A town without the co-operative instinct of equity is not favourable to the enfranchisement of labour. Mr. Joseph Croucher, writing from the Royal Gardens, Kew, related that a gentleman once told him that he was stopping at an hotel, and noticing the waiter (a Yorkshire-

<sup>1</sup> *Co-operative News*, December 16, 1876, art. by Mr. E. V. Neale.



man) to be a sharp fellow, he asked him how long he had been in the place. "Eighteen years, sir," was the answer. "Eighteen years!" said the gentleman; "I wonder you are not the proprietor yourself!" "Oh," said the waiter, "my master is a Yorkshireman also."<sup>1</sup> Wit may outwit wit: equity alone gives others a chance.

The joint-stock theory of Oldham is that if every inhabitant becomes a shareholder in some company, the profit of the whole industry of the district will be shared by everybody in it—which is what Co-operation aims at. This scheme requires everybody to join in it, which never happens. But if this universal joint-stock shareholding really results in the same equitable distribution of profits as Co-operation seeks to bring about, why not put these aims in force in every mill? Co-operation works for the common benefit. The joint-stock system works for private ends and not for labour.

Some examples of the diversity in the division of profits in co-operative societies will be of the nature of information to the reader.

The rules of the Brampton Bryan Co-operative Farming Society, promoted by Mr. Walter Morrison, order that every person employed as an officer or labourer shall be paid such sum of money that neither exceed one-tenth part of the net profits, nor one-sixth part of the salary or wages earned by such officer or labourer during the year. The rules of this society are all through remarkably clear and brief, and are model rules for co-operative farming.

The Agricultural and Horticultural Co-operative Association, of 92, Long Acre, London, limits its interest upon capital to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. It takes no second interest, but returns the balance of profit to the purchasing shareholders.

The East London Provident and Industrial Society set apart  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. profits for an educational fund, and a portion of the profits may be applied to any purpose conducive to the health, instruction, recreation, or comfort of the members and their families, which may include lectures and excursions.

The Hawick Co-operative Hosiery Company, 1873, divide such portions of the net profits, or such portion as may be agreed on at the quarterly meeting, equally between capital

<sup>1</sup> *Co-operator*, March 28, 1868.

and labour, at so much per £ on share capital, and so much per £ on wages received by the worker. The profit rule of this society has one merit, that of not containing the word "bonus," but it pays capital twice.

The Manchester Spinning and Manufacturing Company, 1860, permits net profits to be equally divided upon capital and wages at so much in the £, payable to all workers who have been a full half-year employed, others have such sum placed to the credit of each workman, until he by purchase or otherwise holds five shares in the company, the rest is paid to the worker. These rules recognise capital as an equal participator with labour.

The Union Land and Building Society of Manchester has a special rule on the marriage of female members. Any married woman, or any woman about to be married, may be a member in accordance with, and subject to, the provisions of section 5 of the Married Women's Property Act of 1870, and such female member may apply in writing to the committee pursuant to provision 5 of the aforesaid Act, to have her shares entered in the books of the society in her name as a married woman, as being intended for her separate use. If she omits this notice, the shares would be accredited to the husband. The profits of this society are divided equally between labour and capital. Capital is a creature with an impudent face, and as Elliot said of Communism, always "hath yearnings for an equal division of unequal earnings."

The Cobden Mills Company proposed to distribute half profits arising over 10 per cent. interest to capital, among the officers, clerks, overlookers, weavers, and other persons in the employment of the company, in proportion to the wages or amount of salary received. If any invention or improved process be placed at the disposal of the company, by any one in its employment, the value of it is taken into account in fixing the amount of profit to be given to him. But the remaining half of such clear net profit over and above 10 per cent. is to be divided between the members of the company in proportion to the respective amount belonging to them in the paid-up capital of the company.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I held two hundred shares in this company, the first money I ever had to invest, and never received a penny of interest, or the principal.



In the "Co-operator's Hand-book" it is provided in the 60th clause, which relates to "Bonus on Capital," that "Capital (having received its interest) shall *further* be entitled to a bonus consisting of all surplus of the dividends from time to time, apportioned therein *beyond the interest due.*"<sup>1</sup> This being the doctrine of the Hand-book of 1855, the first Hand-book issued, no wonder confusion as to the claims of capital long existed in the co-operative mind. Mr. Neale and his coadjutors the Christian Socialists, made no claim of this kind with regard to their own capital. It was put in the Hand-book under the belief that capital could not be obtained for productive enterprises without the allurements of this extra remuneration. This has contributed to the slow and precarious career of co-operative manufacturing. The allurements were needed for workmen, instead of which it was accorded to capital. It was enthusiasm among workmen that was wanted to be called out by prospect of gain. Had it been so encouraged, large sums of capital subscribed in the prospect of double interest would never have been lost, as it often has been, through the indifference and torpidity of workmen. Had the second interest been secured to the men, the capitalist had seldom lost his first.<sup>2</sup>

The rules of the Hebden Bridge Fustian Co-operative Society, 1873, after paying  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on paid-up shares, divide profits at an equal rate per £ between labour and purchasers. This is a workman's society.

In the division of profits prescribed in the Hand-book published by the Co-operative Board, 1874, the surplus which exists after payment of all charges legally incurred, is to be divided equally between purchasers and workers.

The problem is, can there be a division of profits between labour and trade which shall content the worker, and accord to the consumer that proportion which shall secure his custom, which may largely supersede the cost of advertisements,

<sup>1</sup> Page 28.

<sup>2</sup> "Major Cartwright, the reformer, served in his youth in the Royal Navy, which took him into various parts of the world, and among others into the Mediterranean Sea, when we were at war with the Turks. Greece being part of Turkey, our cruisers had to give chase to Greek merchant vessels, but they rarely if ever made a capture. Cartwright was curious to ascertain the cause; and after observation and inquiry, he attributed it to the fact that, according to the custom of the Greeks, every one of the crew, from the captain to his cabin-boy, had a share in the vessel" (Letter by Matthew Davenport Hill, *Co-operator*, No. 41, July, 1863).

travellers, commissions, and other outlays incidental to ordinary business?

The consumer, it is said, has "no more right to share in them than has the man who goes to an inn, is fed and lodged there and pays his reckoning and never dreams of a share in the profits made by the landlord." Nevertheless, if advantage accrued to the landlord of increase and certainty of custom by concession to the traveller, it would be worth his while to make it. It is not a question of right, but of policy.

Those who advocate the recognition of the purchaser in production as in distribution, do so on the ground that it will pay, as it has done in the store.

Three things are necessary to production—labour, capital, and custom. Capital and labour would have a poor time of it were it not for the consumers who pay for their product. Of these three, why should custom alone be left out? All the while the customer can be as active as any one if he has a motive. He can point out what he wants, give orders, or bring or procure them from others. In fact, he can make it worth the while of any producing society to recognise him.

To select as a rule cheap things rather than good things is immoral. Any purchaser of humane feeling would rather feel sure that those who made his goods were not ground down in wages, but had been fairly paid. As well buy off a murderer as buy from a manufacturer who murders his workers through excess of business capacity. If there be not a spot of blood on the article when you place it in your room, there is a spot of murder on the mind content to profit by it. Canon Charles Kingsley fixed for ever a stain upon willing or careless buyers of "cheap clothes and nasty."

If the co-operative workshop is to succeed like the store, it must pray for men of the type of Caleb Garth, with whose portraiture George Eliot has enriched industrial literature.

"Caleb Garth often shook his head in meditation on the value, the indispensable might of that myriad-headed, myriad-handed labour by which the social body is fed, clothed, and

housed. The echoes of the great hammer where roof or keel were a-making, the signal-shouts of the workmen, the war of the furnace, the thunder and plash of the engine, were a sublime music to him; the felling and lading of timber, and the huge trunk vibrating star-like in the distance along the highway, the crane at work on the wharf, the piled-up produce in warehouses, the precision and variety of muscular effort wherever exact work had to be turned out—all these sights of his youth had acted on him as poetry without the aid of the poets, had made a philosophy for him without the aid of philosophers, a religion without the aid of theology.

“I think his virtual divinities were good *practical schemes, accurate work, and the faithful completion of undertakings*: his prince of darkness was a *slack workman*. But there was no spirit of denial in Caleb, and the world seemed so wondrous to him that he was ready to accept any number of systems, like any number of firmaments, if they did not obviously interfere with the best land-drainage, solid building, correct measuring, and judicious boring (for coal).”<sup>1</sup> If the myriad of craftsmen share in the advantage of their skill, how much nobler is the spectacle they present!

Pothier, in his *Treatise on the Law of Partners*, defines partners as “a society formed for obtaining honest profits,” a definition which would tell against a good many partnerships of very respectable pretensions. There is a charm in any plan that has a moral element in it, and if the element be what the lead miners call a “lode,” or the colliers a “thick seam,” or iron masters a “bed cropping out on the surface,” so much the better. If, however, the moral element be merely like one of Euclid’s lines, having length but not breadth, it is not worth public attention, and human interest in it takes the form of a mathematical point which has position but no parts. But if it has in it a palpable equitable element, recognising the right of the artificer to ultimate competence, the interest in such a workshop has all the dimensions of solid satisfaction.

<sup>1</sup> “Middlemarch.”

## CHAPTER XXIII

## THE WHOLESALE SOCIETY

"In the moral world there is nothing impossible, if we bring a thorough will to it. Man can do everything with himself, but he must not attempt to do too much with others."—W. HUMBOLDT.

EVERYBODY understands the natural history of discovery. Some one proposes to do something which it is thought will be useful. It is at once declared to be absurd; then it is found out that if it was done it would be dangerous; next it is proved impossible, and that it was never done before, and it would have been done if it had been possible. Nevertheless the proposers of the new thing persist that it can be done. They come then to be designated by the disagreeable names of "fanatics," impracticables, spoliators, incendiaries, visionaries, doctrinaires, dreamers, and, generally, troublesome and pestiferous persons. It is surmised that they are probably of very bad morals, unsound in theology, and certainly ignorant of the first principles of political economy. At length they succeed. Their plan is then found to be eminently useful, very desirable, and the source of profits and advantages to all concerned. Then it is suddenly discovered that there never was anything new in it—that it had always been known—that it is all as old as the hills, and the valleys too—that it was recorded from the day history began, and, doubtless, before. Those who reviled it, and distrusted it, now find out that they always believed in it; and those who oppressed and denied it now become aware that it was they who suggested it—that they were the originators of it, and they who bore all the obloquy and opposition of carrying it through, had really nothing to do

with it. Something like this is the history of the Co-operative Wholesale Buying Society of Manchester, which is a federation of stores for the wholesale purchase and distribution of commodities for store sale.

When co-operative societies first began to multiply on the Sussex coast, the idea of organising arrangements for buying first took form. Dr. King was chief promoter of a plan for this purpose. Lady Noel Byron contributed £300 to enable it to be carried into effect. My townsman, Mr. William Pare, of Birmingham, was an advocate of a plan of this nature for twenty years before it occupied the attention of Promoters of Working Men's Associations in London, who were the first to practically advance it.

The first official mention of a Co-operative Wholesale Society dates as far back as 1832. The idea was started at the first Manchester Conference, when it was thought that £500 would be sufficient to set it going, and one was established at Liverpool which bore the name of the North-West of England United Co-operative Company, its object being to enable the societies to purchase their goods under more advantageous terms. Mr. Craig relates that at a bazaar held in the Royal Exchange, Liverpool, the rent of which was contributed by Lady Noel Byron, delegates attended who brought goods which had been manufactured by co-operators, and a large exchange was effected. There were linens from Barnsley, prints from Birkacre, stuffs from Halifax, shoes from Kendal, cutlery from Sheffield, and lace from Leicestershire. One society had £400 worth of woollen goods, another had £200 of cutlery. Some of the delegates were nearly entirely clad in clothes made by co-operators. The Wigan Society had the possession of a farm, for which they paid £600 a year.

But it was in Rochdale that the idea was destined to take root and grow and be transplanted to Manchester. A mile and half or more from Oldham, in a low-lying uncheerful spot, there existed, twenty years ago, a ramshackle building known as Jumbo Farm. A shrewd co-operator who held it, Mr. Boothman, had observed in the Shudehill Market, Manchester, that it was great stupidity for five or six buyers of co-operative stores to meet there and buy against



each other and put up prices, and he invited a number of them and others to meet at Jumbo Farm on Sundays, and discuss the Wholesale idea; and on Saturday nights at the Oldham store at King Street, a curious visitor might have observed a solid and ponderous load of succulent joints well accompanied, a stout cheese being conspicuous, for Sunday consumption, during the Wholesale discussion; for the hearty co-operators at Jumbo had appetites as well as ideas. Unaware what efforts had preceded theirs, they came to imagine that they also devised the Wholesale. It was another mind earlier occupied than theirs in attention to it, which had matured a working conception of it.

Jumbo Farm is nearly effaced or built over now. It had a dreary, commonplace look when I last saw it. Though I do not believe, as certain old frequenters of that jaggling spot do, that the gravitation, the circulation of the blood, and Queen Cassiopia's chair were first discovered there, I respect it because useful discussions were held there under Mr. Boothman's occupancy; and I was glad to hear from Mr. Marcroft authentic particulars how the joints got there on the good days of debate, when co-operators were "feeling their way"—and, what showed their good sense, eating their way too; for lean reformers seldom hit upon fat discoveries. There were and still are two great stores in Oldham—Greenacres and King Street. Greenacres has never carried out Sunday gatherings on any occasion. King Street Co-operative Society has done so for over twenty-five years, and many of their best and most successful projects have first been talked of at these Sunday meetings. That society has probably the largest number of members who are ever trying to get new light to better understand what is possible and immediately practicable. The members have no dogmatic opinions as to religion or politics, but are prepared to hear all men, and change action when duty and interest lead, reverencing the old and accepting the new. For all this, as well as for its interest in the commissariat of Jumbo, King Street shall be held in honour among stores! The *Christian Socialist* periodical, of 1852, published an account of a conference held in Manchester, when Mr. Smithies, of Rochdale, was appointed one of a committee, of which

Mr. L. Jones was also a member, to take steps for establishing a general depôt in Manchester for supplying the store with groceries and provisions. At that time Mr. L. Jones drew up a plan,<sup>1</sup> which contained the elementary ideas of an organised depôt so far as experience then indicated them. Thus the idea had from the beginning been in the air. Costly attempts were made to localise it in London in 1850. A few years later Rochdale conducted a wholesale department in connection with its store for the supply of Lancashire and Yorkshire. But it became apparent that the increasing stores of the country could never be supplied adequately by a department of any store, and that Rochdale having co-operated with the Wholesale Society in London, devised and carried forward a working plan suited to the needs and means of the stores in Lancashire and Yorkshire. They trimmed the lamp afresh, and for some ten years they kept it burning : its light enabling other pioneer co-operators to see their way to founding a new, separate, and more comprehensive society, which came to bear the name of the North of England Wholesale. Mr. Crabtree was on the committee of the Wholesale in 1865, the same year in which Mr. Nuttall first joined it. Mr. Crabtree recalls a series of public facts which prove that by all contemporaries best acquainted with the subject, Mr. Abraham Greenwood, of Rochdale, was the chief founder of the Wholesale.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Crabtree sets forth that "in the *Co-operator* for March, 1863 (vol. 3), Mr. Greenwood propounded his plan for a Wholesale Agency, which, with some modifications, formed the basis of their organisation." Mr. Nuttall's paper, read at the London Congress, in 1869, makes reference to the efforts of 1856, and shows that its promoters failed to agree as to the best means of raising the capital. Particulars of this are given on page 39 in the Congress Report, and on page 40 Mr. Nuttall gives credit to Mr. Greenwood for having proposed a plan which was ultimately adopted. Instead of charging a commission upon goods bought, they charged for their goods a price which covered the commission, and was intended only to be sufficient to cover expenses incurred.

<sup>1</sup> *Co-operative News*, May 12, 1877.

<sup>2</sup> Part II.—"History of the Equitable Pioneers."



The Wholesale scheme in its inception and careful steps for carrying it out in 1864, is a good example of the constructive co-operators' methods. Thrice the attempt had been made, thrice it had discouragingly failed. More than thirty years had intervened since the project was first launched. It had been lost like a ship at sea, but had not foundered, and was heard of again. Again and again it went out of sight and record, and again reappeared. Mr. Greenwood examined the vessel, found its sailing powers were all right, but it was sent out to coasts where no business could be done, and consequently could not keep up a working crew, and the ship could never get back to port without assistance.

The reader knows from public report what the expenses usually are of promoting and establishing an insurance or other company. Many might think that the magical "twopence," out of which Rochdale finance arose, would be insufficient here, but the actual levy fell very much below, as the following circular, sent to each society by Mr. William Cooper when the Wholesale was resolved on, will show :—

"At a conference of delegates from industrial and provident co-operative societies, held at the King Street Stores meeting-room, Oldham, on December 25, 1862, it was resolved :— 'That all co-operative societies be requested to contribute one farthing per member, to meet the expenses that may arise.' The purposes for which the money is required are—to meet the expenses of the committee in carrying out the resolutions of the Conference, viz. :—To remedy a few defects of the Act of 1862 in the present session of Parliament ; to prepare plans for a central agency and wholesale depôt ; and consider plans for insurance, assurance, and guarantee, in connection with the co-operative societies. Therefore your society is respectfully solicited for the above contribution of one farthing per member."<sup>1</sup>

This Wholesale tax, when it was gathered in, would have

<sup>1</sup> In the minutes of October 9, 1864, it is recorded that "in future no commission will be charged on goods sold." The reason of this was that the knowledge of prices which the system of charging a commission disclosed, enabled buyers to take advantage of the Wholesale. The Society itself has gone on the lines originally marked out for it (Letter to Author by Mr. James Crabtree, 1886).

been of small avail had not strong and clear proofs of advantage been drawn up and presented to the confederators. The benefits calculated by Mr. Greenwood as likely to arise (and which have been realised) he foretold as follows :—

“1st. Stores are enabled, through the agency, to purchase more economically than heretofore, by reaching the best markets.

“2nd. Small stores and new stores are at once put in a good position, by being placed directly (through the agency) in the best markets, thus enabling them to sell as cheap as any first-class shopkeeper.

“3rd. As all stores have the benefit of the best markets, by means of the agency, it follows that dividends paid by stores must be more equal than heretofore ; and, by the same means, dividends considerably augmented.

“4th. Stores, especially large ones, are able to carry on their businesses with less capital. Large stores will not, as now, be necessitated, in order to reach the minimum prices of the markets, to purchase goods they do not require for the immediate supply of their members.

“5th. Stores are able to command the services of a good buyer, and will thus save a large amount of labour and expense, by one purchaser buying for some 150 stores ; while the whole amount of blundering in purchasing at the commencement of a co-operative store is obviated.”

Never was a great movement created by clearer arguments or a smaller subscription. The Wholesale began at a bad time, when the cotton famine prevailed, and the first half-year it lost money, but the second half-year its directors contrived to clear off the loss, and pay a dividend of 12s. 6d. per cent. With an average capital of £2,000, and working expenses amounting to £267, the company transacted business to the amount of £46,000. The economy of capital and labour thus achieved was unprecedented, and a proof of the power and advantage of the ready-money rule. Such were the results accomplished by the Farthing Federation in 1864.

Within twelve months, Lord Brougham (than whom none knew better how to appreciate the significance of such a step) spoke of it as one “which, in its consequence, would promote Co-operation to a degree almost incalculable.” When

Mr. Horace Greeley was last in England, he inquired of me, as was his wont, with Cobbett-like keenness, as to the progress of Co-operation. From information he received from others also he wrote an account of the Wholesale in the *New York Tribune*, in which he confirmed Lord Brougham's estimation of its importance.

Scotland has a Wholesale Society of its own, which is situated in Glasgow. The Manchester Wholesale was solicited to establish a branch there, but ultimately the Scottish co-operators established one themselves. In 1873 the new warehouse of the Scottish Wholesale Society, a large commanding building, was opened in the Paisley Road, Glasgow. Mr. Alexander James Meldrum was the President, and James Borrowman, Manager. The first year of the Scottish Wholesale Society they did business to the amount of £81,000. In the fifth year £380,000. Their capital the first year was £5,000, in the fifth £37,000. Their total divisible profit, exclusive of interest, exceeded £18,000 in the first five years.

In 1863, Ellen Mason, writing from Whitfield Rectory, remarked that "a Wholesale Dépôt at Newcastle would be an immense boon to us." Many years later the appeal was listened to, as was also an application made in London, where a branch was established at 118, Minories,<sup>1</sup> with great advantage to the Southern stores. In 1865 an application was made from New South Wales to the Wholesale, to consider whether the Co-operative Society of Sydney could not purchase through it.

Its method of business is: With the first order a remittance must be enclosed sufficient to cover the value of the goods. Future accounts must be paid on receipt of invoice, or within seven days from the date; but if not paid within fourteen days no more goods will be supplied until such overdue accounts are paid.

The shares, which were £5 each, were issued on condition that a society took out one for each ten members belonging to it, increasing the number annually as its members increase.<sup>2</sup>

The progress of the Wholesale during fourteen years from

<sup>1</sup> It has since built imposing premises of its own at 99, Leman Street, Whitechapel.

<sup>2</sup> This rule is now altered to £1 for each member.

1864 to 1877 the following table tells. The figures are taken from the Rochdale Pioneers' Almanac of 1878 :—

Year.	No. of Members in Societies which are Shareholders.	£s shares taken up.	Capital, Share, and Loan.	Value of Goods Sold.	Net Profit.
1864	18,337		£ 2,456	£ 51,858	£ 267
1865	24,005		7,182	120,755	1,859
1866	31,030		10,936	175,420	2,310
1867	57,443		24,208	255,779	3,452
1868	74,494		28,148	381,464	4,925
1869	77,686		37,785	469,171	3,584
1870	87,854		43,950	653,608	6,818
1871	114,184	5,821	49,262	727,737	8,038
1872	131,191	6,651	133,493	1,049,394	10,468
1873	163,661	12,894	190,578	1,531,950	14,044
1874	192,457	16,641	228,817	1,925,548	19,903
1875	241,829	21,473	360,527	2,103,226	23,816
1876	274,874	24,658	399,255	2,644,322	34,808
1877	273,351	24,850	414,462	2,791,477	33,274

In 1877 there were 588 societies buying from the Wholesale. In the table above the reader will see the number of members in these Societies that exceeded 273,000. The Reserved Capital of the Wholesale is £27,898. This Society had (1878) 32 buyers and salesmen, including those stationed at Cork, Limerick, Kilmarnock, Tipperary, Waterford, Tralee, Armagh, and New York. The large Reserve Fund is yearly increased so as to render every department of the Society secure. One department, that of banking, has grown to such dimensions that its separation from the Wholesale is advised by the most prudent friends of the Society, and that it be conducted on recognised banking principles.

The fifty-first quarterly balance-sheet of this society was described by a writer in the *Newcastle Chronicle* (1877) as a huge folio pamphlet of twenty-four pages, filled with all sorts of accounts and statistics rendered with painstaking minuteness. The Wholesale serves 22 counties, besides parts of Scotland, Ireland, and the Isle of Man.

The total cash received from the whole area during one quarter was £815,411, yielding a dividend to the customer-societies of £6,211. The expense of management for the quarter was £6,223. The smallest return is from Cornwall, amounting to £3 10s. 4d. The Wholesale holds land and



buildings and the ship *Plover* of the estimated value of £72,130.<sup>1</sup> Its productive establishments were then a boot factory at Leicester, a biscuit factory at Crumpsall, and a soap factory at Durham. Besides these direct and exclusive investments the Wholesale held shares in seventeen manufacturing, printing, coal, and insurance companies.<sup>2</sup>

Members of this society, being stores, the division of profits is made after the manner of stores. In the productive workshops owned by the Wholesale there is no division of profits with labour. In some businesses custom is great and labour small, and in others labour is large; but labour in every productive society should have representation on the directorate. It is not possible to prescribe an inflexible law of division; but what should be inflexible is the partnership of labour. There should be set apart in workshops, as in stores, funds for educational purposes. It does not pay to have fools for members, and it is shabby to depend for information upon papers written and speeches given by charity.

Every producing society should be co-operative, self-acting, and self-sustaining. Like the products of Nature, every seed of organised industry, wherever it took root, would yield perfect fruit in every place; then federation will be the federation of equals gaining like an army by combination, perfect in individual discipline, and able, each like the English at Inkermann, to make a stand on its own account. Under a true co-operative system factories and industrial works will rear workmen who will have the old ambition of skilled craftsmen. The means of social education should be available in every mill and mine, factory and farm.

If the directors of the Wholesale add to their other great achievements the revival of participation in the profits of labour in their productive works, they may increase their profits, command the goodwill of the whole labouring community, and win a more splendid repute than was accomplished by Robert Owen at New Lanark, which subsisted for three years.

How difficult it was in the early days of Co-operation to get persons qualified to buy! Buyers, like poets, seem to be born,

<sup>1</sup> They now own eight steamships.

<sup>2</sup> *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, 1876.

not made. They must possess the tact of the market. It is of small use that a man has money to buy with, unless he knows where to find the right dealers in the right thing. A mechanic, while confined to workshops, does not often know where to go to buy. There are certain tea fields in the world known to produce certain qualities of tea, and certain houses get possession of them. Some men who do know where to look for the article they want, probably do not know it when they see it. A man who is a great tea buyer has tea in his blood: just as famous mechanics who have steel in their blood, know metals by instinct, as some men do colours or textures, or as artists do forms and tints. I know one coffee roaster in Manchester who has coffee in his blood, and I never knew but one man in London who had. Sugars are also a special field for the exercise of natural taste. The Wholesale Society engage, or create, or nurture a class of great buyers, to ensure to the humblest store advantages they could not command for themselves. The officers of the Wholesale submit any doubtful food to the operation of the public analyst. Sometimes a store will report through its local buyer that it can purchase much cheaper than the society can buy through the Wholesale. Specimens of what has been so bought are asked for, when, on sending it to the analyst, it has transpired that the cheapness was owing to the commodity being fraudulently adulterated. Local buyers are subjected to so many temptations, by commissions clandestinely or openly offered by agents seeking orders, that many who are men of honesty when they take office cease to be so in a short time. Unless the store finds a buyer of unusual integrity who resists doing what he sees others do,<sup>1</sup> a store must pay a higher salary to place him above temptation. The Wholesale Society has been a great source of fiduciary morality and economy by affording the stores a buying agency.

A considerable sum of money has been spent with a view of instituting a Mississippi Valley Trading Company. A deputation was sent to New Orleans to promote that object, and a scheme promoted of International Co-operation between England and America, officially brought under the notice of the Grangers of the United States at their Annual Conferences.

<sup>1</sup> See "On Commissions," by John S. Storr, Trübner & Co., London.



At a quarterly meeting of the Wholesale several hundred delegates assemble, and a more striking spectacle of the capacity of the working class for business, when their minds are set upon it by self-training and intelligent interest, is not to be witnessed in England or elsewhere. Between the House of Commons of to-day and the Wholesale Conference there is an instructive comparison. The delegates of the Wholesale present an appearance of more alertness, brightness, and resolute attention to business than is to be seen in the House of Commons. In that House of 670 members there are not more than 70 who attend earnestly to business. There are about 100 who attend pretty well to their own business, and the remainder attend to anything else when it occurs to them. At the Wholesale Conference all the members attend to the business. The Chairman knows what the business is, and accelerates it if it loiters on the way. Each delegate has in his hands a huge-sized folio covered with a wilderness of figures; and when one page is exhausted the rustle of leaves turning over simultaneously in every part of the hall is not unlike the rising of a storm at sea, or a descent of asteroids in November, or the vibration of silk when the rush of ladies takes place at her Majesty's Drawing-Room. The directors of the Wholesale, like Ministers in Parliament, are all on the platform, ready to answer questions put, and sometimes have replies on hand to questions which are not put. In every part of the large hall in Balloon Street, or Leman Street, the voices of questioners and critics break out in quick succession. No body of the industrious classes in England excel a Conference of the Wholesale; nowhere else are the delegates more numerous; nowhere else is every one better able to make a speech; every one having some business knowledge and experience of the branch he represents.

## CHAPTER XXIV

## LONDON CO-OPERATION—THE REVOLT OF THE GROCERS

"Folly is a contagious disease, but there is difficulty in catching wisdom."—G. J. H.

CO-OPERATION has produced two distinct and protracted revolts—one of the grocers, another of their customers. The first revolt is very little known, and none are now alive who were observant of it, or actors in it. Co-operation cannot be said to be a disturbing influence since it seeks amity, and has always been pacific ; but private traders have been perturbed concerning it for a century. The first revolt of the grocers against it took place before the days of the first Reform Bill. We know tradesmen conspire against it ; when Mr. Baliol Brett (since Mr. Justice Brett) went down to oppose Mr. Cobden at Rochdale, his chief charge against the great free trader was that he was friendly to Co-operation. At the general election of 1872 candidates well disposed towards it were reticent concerning it, and others not reticent, who had held seats in the previous Parliament, lost them. The knowledge that they had stood up for fair play for co-operators proved fatal to them. Co-operation we know has been the perplexity of two Governments. Chancellors of the Exchequer have a terror of deputations praying to have Co-operation put down. The Government of Mr. Gladstone carefully abstained from saying anything in its favour, and that of Lord Beaconsfield abstained from doing anything against it. Co-operation was said to be impossible ; and if not impossible impractical ; nevertheless efforts are constantly made to prevent the impracticable from being put into practice.

Adversaries among shopkeepers have shown skill in pre-

serving themselves from the infection of wisdom. Though confident in their superiority as trained competitors, they show distress at the appearance of amateurs in the field, as the Church clergy did, when the untutored Wesleyans took to preaching on the village green. It was beneath the clerical dignity to fear competition. They strengthened it by showing terror at it, as tradesmen do at Co-operation.

The Co-operation of our time, imagined to be a recent invention, is built upon the ruins of extinct movements buried out of sight and knowledge of the commercial classes of to-day, under forests of forgotten publications as completely as Pompeii under the ashes of Vesuvius. Strange is it to see grocers and tradesmen descending into the streets, to arrest the progress of Co-operation, holding indignation meetings in the ante-rooms of the Government in Downing Street, and to read that their forefathers in business were equally excited a century ago.

When the Union Mill was first commenced in Devonport, adjoining Plymouth, in 1815, the members had no mill, bake-house, or shop of their own, in which to make up or sell their flour. They rented a small store, in which to sell their bread, and were dependent on a baker for making it. The bakers soon combined against them, and wrote to the Admiralty to put them down. The Government never appear to have been very anxious to take the part of one set of tradesmen against another. A venerable survivor, who was 84 years old in 1863, mortgaged a house as he had to raise £600 to enable a new society to be established in the town.<sup>1</sup>

The British Association (for the Promotion of Co-operation) of 1830 brought under the notice of its members "with extreme regret that an ignorant yet powerful band of petty shopkeepers at Hampstead, has been successful by bribes and cunning in frustrating the attempt of some co-operators in that place to hold a public meeting, and that the parochial authorities of Tunbridge Wells and of Thurmaston, in Leicestershire, have withdrawn the trifling pittance given by the parish to some poor people who were making attempts to relieve themselves from so degrading a dependence for bread. Others threatened with like privations have been obliged to

<sup>1</sup> Letter of James Pound, *Co-operator*, vol. iv., p. 87.

withdraw from membership of the co-operative societies, and remain a burden to their parishes.”<sup>1</sup> The probability is that the shopkeepers who happened to be guardians were willing to throw upon their neighbours this liability in order to protect their own interests at the counter. In other places local influence was brought to bear upon officers of the Government, and representations were made to them on behalf of grocers. At Godalming, in Surrey, the trustees of a Co-operative Association in 1830 were refused a licence for the sale of tea by the Excise officers, to prevent them beginning the grocery trade, which would interfere with that of retail dealers close by. Whereupon Mr. G. R. Skene wrote to the Board of Excise, who behaved very well in the matter. The persons refusing the licence received a severe reprimand, and a licence was instantly granted with apologies, and an illegal fee returned. At Poole a threatened extortion of the parish rates was made upon the co-operators with a view to deter them, but it was successfully resisted. Mr. Skene was the Secretary of the British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge, which met in London.

The grocers being personally affected by co-operative shop-keeping have been oftener before the public in opposition to it, but they have not been more unpleasant in their action than manufacturers, or farmers, or other classes, whose trade interests have been affected by any rival movement. The clergy have been quite as disagreeable to Dissenting ministers, and have appealed to Parliament to suppress them oftener than shopkeepers have appealed for public aid. There seems to be no difference in the practices of gentlemen and poor men where trade interests are threatened. Employers, capitalists, and even bishops and noblemen, were all as spiteful and as offensive as workmen, to whom lower wages meant disease and home misery. From 1826 to 1836 numerous instances occur of the “superior” classes being engaged in strikes and rattening and picketing as against the lower classes. The discreditable practices are solely imputed to working men and trade unionists. Grocers have been the most noisy, but co-operators have been attacked by more dangerous adversaries.

<sup>1</sup> Third Quarterly report of the “Proceedings of the British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge.”

Mr. William Carson, a delegate to the Third Co-operative Congress, held in London in April, 1832, related that "he held a situation with a highly respectable architect employed by the Commissioners for building churches, amongst whom were several bishops and others of the aristocracy. His discharge was sent him although he had a wife and large family to maintain, because he had rendered himself obnoxious to the Commissioners by the active exertions he had made in aid of Co-operation." Upon the architect appealing to the Commissioners on Mr. Carson's behalf, telling them of the situation in which he would be placed if they were determined upon his discharge, the reply was "he must be discharged and they would bear the responsibility." Whatever injustice these inspired gentlemen practised, they were pretty safe, and they knew it.

Mr. E Taylor, delegate from Birkacre, Lancashire, who represented a society of more than three hundred persons, whose premises for printing silks and cottons stood at a rental of £600, stated that they suffered greatly from the jealousies of capitalists and masters who had tampered with their landlord to get them turned out of their premises.<sup>1</sup> These cases were oft reported. The jealous adversary generally succeeded.

In the days of the Cotton Famine in Lancashire and Yorkshire the shopkeepers on relief committees oft behaved with incredible shabbiness to the co-operators. In many towns they caused the co-operators to be refused any participation in the funds publicly subscribed for the relief of the distressed.

Liberals have always been more or less prompt in befriending Co-operation ; but tradesmen, in their hostility to it, have always assumed that the Conservatives could be depended upon to put it down. It is therefore justice to record the honourable letter which the late Earl Derby wrote at the opening of the new store at Prestwich, dated Knowsley, January 6, 1864. His Lordship said to Mr. Pitman, "If any persons have been led to believe that I look coldly on the co-operative movement, they are greatly mistaken. It has always appeared to me to be well calculated to encourage in the operative classes habits of frugality, temperance, and self-dependence ; and if the

<sup>1</sup> Report of Third Congress, 1832.



managers of these societies conduct them prudently, not entering into wild speculations, and retaining in hand a sufficient amount of reserved capital to meet casual emergencies, they cannot fail to exercise a beneficial influence upon the habits of the population, both morally and physically." Lord Derby was a man of honour, he might sincerely sacrifice his country to his principles, but he never sacrificed his convictions to his party.

Passages have been published from time to time by men of eminence or influence, favourable to Co-operation. Among these were John Stuart Mill, the present Lord Derby (1877), Mr. Gladstone, Professor Francis William Newman, Professor Frederick Denison Maurice, Canon Kingsley, the Rev. William Nassau Molesworth, Lord Brougham, Mr. Bright, Mr. Cobden, and William Chambers. Mr. Mill's opinion, written at the opening of the Liverpool Provident Association, is remarkable, like most statements of his, for its completeness and comprehensiveness. He said, "Of all the agencies which are at work to elevate those who labour with their hands, in physical condition, in social dignity, and in those moral and intellectual qualities on which both the others are ultimately dependent, there is none so promising as the present co-operative movement. Though I foresaw, when it was only a project, its great advantages, its success has thus far exceeded my most sanguine expectations, and every year adds strength to my conviction of the salutary influence it is likely to exercise over the destinies of this and other countries."

It was the perilous but honourable practice of Mr. Robert Lowe when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, to give what information he could which might serve a deputation waiting upon him. Had he talked a few platitudes to them and left them to believe he would do what he could when he knew he could do nothing, he had been more popular but less deserving of honour. He told the deputation from the National Chamber of Trade, introduced by Mr. W. H. Smith, M.P., later, Lord of the Admiralty, that "The only way to defeat these societies was by competing with them in the market, and if they were in a condition to do that, let them do so, and combine together, and offer to the public as good terms as these societies did."



Mr. Gladstone, in his correspondence with Messrs. Evison and Barter in 1868, told them with like wisdom and honesty, "Long credits mean large loans by men in business out of their trading capital. This system aggravates the risk of bad debts, which form an additional charge to a good debtor : and it is connected with a general irregularity and uncertainty which must also be paid for. I cannot help thinking that traders are in fault also, and that much might be done by a vigorous effort, and by combination among traders in favour of ready-money dealings."

Some of the deputation to the Liberal ministry were incited, for political reasons, to elicit expressions of opinion that might be used to influence shopkeepers' votes at the election. For tradesmen to ask the Government for aid against competitors was to confess their incompetence to conduct their own business on trade principles. Most of them knew that the Tories could no more interfere on their behalf than the Liberals, and Mr. Gladstone was more their friend than they deserved to find him in the advice he gave them. He saw that if the chief grocers would combine together and open a large ready-money store, guaranteeing the best provisions, they might rival the stores, and in some cases supersede them ; making sufficient profit to share it with purchasers.

Professor Thorold Rogers states—in the address delivered by him at the London Congress in 1875—that, "from careful inquiries made by him of large manufacturers in many branches of productive industry, as to the cost at which these articles were charged in their books when they left the workshop, compared with the prices charged to the purchaser by the retail trader, he found that the additions made, as the charge of distribution, very commonly doubled the price of the article." Not that the retail trade gained the enormous addition, but that the cost of distribution is increased from excess of middlemen. Co-operators are often under the illusion that their savings represent the profit of the shopkeeper, whereas they also represent the cost which the shopkeeper incurs. The co-operator gains what the shopkeeper loses, and they do not. Herein the shopkeepers by combination can gain equally.

The Civil Service Co-operative Society have a place of business in the Haymarket, yet every day, nearly from top

to the bottom of the street, as great a crowd of carriages of the nobility are to be seen as are to be found in Piccadilly, at Fortnum and Mason's the day before the Derby day. As many footmen surround the doors of this Civil Service Store as are to be found round Swan and Edgar's, or Waterloo House, in Cockspur Street. Yet at this Haymarket store there are more forms to be gone through, and more trouble to be encountered in buying a pound of butter than in obtaining a dividend from the Bank of England. This is not all the wonder. The Haymarket is not a place of sweetest repute. True, there are honest houses and residents of good fame in it; yet it remains suspicious to hear a young marchioness accosted in Rotten Row by a young nobleman, who assures her he has not had the pleasure to see her since he met her in the Haymarket. It could hardly be any light or unimportant thing which induces ladies of "high degree" to subject themselves to be addressed in terms which are considered to require explanation. What is it that attracts these illustrious customers; and induces them to incur all this conspicuousness, suspicion, discomfort, and fatigue, but the satisfaction of providing their houses with articles of consumption which they think they can depend upon for purity, and obtain at moderate charges? There is no instance in the whole of London of any shop so unattractively situated commanding customers so numerous and so distinguished. This shows the grocers what they have to do.

Advantage comes to a great store saving the rents of a hundred shops, a hundred servants, the support of a hundred proprietors, in addition to saving the taxes and advertisements of as many places. The cost of small shops is very great to the public, but the gain to the shopkeeper is little. The greater part of what he receives in price is lost on the way by his many expenses in making his little sales, that there scarcely remains in his hands enough to keep him in his useful but often needless calling. It is only this little profit of the shopkeeper that the co-operator intercepts. He gathers up what never comes into the shopkeeper's hands. The unseeing saying that "what the co-operator gains comes out of the shopkeeper's pocket" causes the shopkeeper to think himself five times more harmed than is true, and it conceals from the

co-operator that four out of five portions of his gain are not won in a victory over the tradesmen, but by his joining in business with his fellows, by faithfulness to his own store, and by equity in trade. If every shopkeeper was abolished to-morrow by Act of Parliament, co-operators would gain little. Co-operative prosperity does not come by prayer, but by prudence ; not by caprice, but by concert. It is seeing this clearly, seeing it constantly, seeing it always, which constitutes the education of the co-operator.

Pictures have been drawn by shopkeepers of every tradesman being bankrupt and the town in the hands of the co-operators. Of course this never happened, but it was thought all the more likely by the excited, because it never could happen. An enterprising friend of mine,<sup>1</sup> wishing me to name some town where he might open a new shop, I at once said, "Rochdale, and nestle near the store, that is the best place for a new shopkeeper." "Well," he answered, "any one who looks about towns to see what is the matter with them, and what openings they offer, sees what people living in them do not see, because they are so obvious, and the obvious is the last thing people do see—but you must be wrong about Rochdale." My answer was, "Near a store is the place for a new shop to pay. First, a number of outsiders will buy off you, to spite the store. Next, half the co-operators will buy off you themselves, for half the co-operators always think the goods in the shops are cheaper and better than those in their own stores." Every director of a store knows this. He has heard it at quarterly meetings a hundred times. Half the stores do not buy themselves off their own Wholesale Society, because they believe they "can do better elsewhere." Half the members of any store are dividend hunters—not a bad sort of hunting in its way—and I am glad that co-operative stores are good hunting-grounds for the working classes ; but an ignorant hunter is like an untrained setter, he has not an educated nose. He does not know where to find the bird ; or he starts it foolishly, whereby it gets away. I went the other day into one of the three greatest stores in the country. My first question, after a long absence, was, as is my wont, "Have

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Henry Holland, boot and shoe manufacturer, of Buckingham, and the frequent host of John Cassell.

you the *Co-operative News* about (the Journal of the societies)? How many purchasers enter this shop in a week?" "Four thousand," was the reply. "How many *Co-operative News* do you sell?" "Oh, FOUR DOZEN!" "Yes," I answered, "that statement wants a great big 'O' to preface it. That means that out of every 4,000 members of the store 3,952 believe they can be co-operators and hunt dividends better without co-operative knowledge than with it." In the pork and butter shop, where they had 1,000 customers a week, they sold one dozen *Co-operative News* only. There was the same discreditable proportion of non-intelligent members found all over the store. The dividend hunters, their name is legion, the intelligence hunters—are twelve in the thousand. Since that time that cultivated store has lost a great pot of gold at one swoop—enough to have bought a copy of the *Co-operative News* every week for every member for the last ten years, and given each a penny with it to read it. Had they done this they would have now £30,000 in hand out of vanished funds. "Therefore, my teetotal, energetic manufacturing friend, if thou wantest to make money, open thy shop under the shadow of a great store, and if only half the unreading members buy of thee, thou wilt make a fortune long before they take in their own paper. Besides, put into thy account the mass of people who do not understand co-operation. In towns like Liverpool and Birmingham the memory of it has almost died out. A mighty and historic store may have 10,000 members in a population of 100,000 inhabitants. That leaves nine-tenths of all purchasing people to the tradesmen. Does not that give you an abounding chance? Then remember that the majority of persons use their brains so little, that the avenues of their minds are blocked up. When they were born there was no School Board to keep the entrance of their intelligence clear, and put something through it. Never fear, shopkeeping will last your time." My friend followed my advice, and prospered exceedingly. A shopkeeper who knows his business can hold his business. It is the other sort who turn into querulous complainants.

There is a saying, "Mad as a hatter." There is nobody so mad as a grocer, when he imagines a co-operator is after him. Yet the better sort of shopkeepers are among the best



friends co-operators have found. They have generously taught workmen the art of keeping shops. In many an emergency they have given counsel and aid. I know it, because I have asked it for the aid of young stores. In Scotland and England I know many shopkeepers—men of genius in their way, masters of their business. Their service of the public is a fine art, and buyers of taste will always go to them. The co-operators are not born who will harm them. Shopkeepers have no more reason to be afraid of Co-operation, than innkeepers have to be afraid of the Permissive Bill. Of course there will be mad publicans as well as demented grocers.

The grocers set Sir Thomas Chambers to make an inquiry in Parliament whether the Government could not put down Civil Service Co-operative Supply Associations. Any clear-headed co-operator, for a moderate fee, would put them up to a thing or two which would endanger the best Civil Service Co-operative Society in the metropolis. All Sir Thomas Chambers could do, if he got his way, would be to spite the Civil Service gentlemen. Once they were removed other men of business would be put in their places.

The Right Hon. C. B. Adderley, M.P. (Conservative), attended a meeting of the Ladywood Co-operative Society in Birmingham, 1869, and made a speech strongly in its favour, and said that "God intended the whole world to be one great association of co-operation." Mr. Sampson Lloyd, M.P. for Plymouth (also a Conservative, elected in lieu of Mr. Morrison, the former Liberal member, who was charged with sympathy with Co-operation), also sent a letter to the Ladywood meeting in approval of its object. Mr. William Howitt afterwards made it an occasion to thank God that Mr. Adderley had discovered, like many other statesmen and landholders, that Co-operation is a great "school of natural instruction."<sup>1</sup> The Liberals, being more in favour of self-action and self-help among the people, have been more friendly to co-operators. Certainly the only members of Parliament who have been active on their behalf, and who have made sacrifices for their success, have been Liberals.

Civil Service Stores, Army and Navy Supply Associations, have done grocers harm in London, and not the Working

<sup>1</sup> *Co-operator*, January, 1869.



Class Stores which Mr. Morrison and Mr. Hughes supported. Yet they were sacrificed by the undiscerning shopkeeping elector who gave his vote to the real enemy. Mr. Hughes was certainly kept out of Parliament at Marylebone through the reputed resentment of the shopkeepers.

Mr. Walter Morrison, M.P., wrote a remarkable letter to the *Daily News* in 1873, in reply to some editorial comments, critical but not unfriendly. Mr. Morrison said : " You seem to think that the societies there represented conduct their trade after the fashion of the Civil Service societies in London. I venture to assert that the very large majority of those who have at heart the continued prosperity of co-operative societies deprecate that manner of doing their trade as earnestly as any retail shopkeeper. We hold that it is unfair to the honest tradesman, who sells genuine and unadulterated goods at a fair living profit, that it degrades Co-operation into a mere mercantile machine for cheapening the price of goods. From the Land's End to John o' Groat's there is not a workman's retail co-operative store which attempts to undersell the tradesmen of the locality ; when tradesmen have combined to ratten the store out of the district by underselling it, the stores have not retaliated in kind."

Though Conservative candidates have profited by opposing, or conniving at opposition to co-operators, it ought to be said to the honour of the Conservative press that it has never concealed its approval of the principle, even as respects Productive Co-operation as applied to manufactures, which fewer persons can be found to speak approvingly of. The *Standard* said, before a general election :—

" Co-operation, on the other hand, though possibly too weak a remedy to be relied upon altogether, is the best device for putting labour, more or less, on a level with capital, which has ever been attempted. As far as it goes it is thoroughly healthy in its action. The co-operative factory . . . competes with the private capitalist, and tends to keep up, at their highest possible level, the terms offered to the workmen in return for his labour."<sup>1</sup>

This was plainly said, the reader can see. The tradesman, therefore, has no ground for treating Co-operation as a political question.

<sup>1</sup> *Standard*, June 4, 1869.

## CHAPTER XXV

## LONDON CO-OPERATION.—THE REVOLT OF THE CUSTOMERS.

"The friends of order became insurgents when a real grievance came home to them. Partizans and apologists of trading confiscation, who regarded it as the reward assigned by Nature to successful competition, so long as they shared the spoil, discovered it to be a shameful exaction when they were subjects of it."—*Eccentricities of Opinion* (unpublished). G. J. H.

THE second revolt produced by Co-operation proved to be a revolt of customers. This long-foreseen but late-arriving insurgency, led to what, for convenience of description, may be designated "London Co-operation." This Metropolitan invention sprang up, extended, and attracted a pretty good share of attention. Early, original co-operation, as it is now regarded, is that which was organised and pursued in Rochdale. This model on which the great stores of the provinces have been founded has become known as "Rochdale Co-operation." It may be taken that there are two kinds of Co-operation—Rochdale Co-operation and London Co-operation. The public generally are not familiar with the distinction, but it contributes to clearness of view to apprehend the nature of the two forms and not mistake one for the other.

The Civil Service Supply Association began, the *Saturday Review* said, with some members of the Civil Service "who were pinched by low salaries and high prices"; they combined together for the purpose of obtaining articles of common domestic use at wholesale prices. They were soon encouraged by finding that they not only saved a good deal of money, but stood a better chance of obtaining goods of high quality than when they bought at retail shops; but also by learning what great profits the Rochdale, Halifax, and Leeds Stores had made

in the same way. Thus gentlemen of London were inspired by the artisans and weavers of Lancashire to establish themselves as shopkeepers. Their humble predecessors had proved the advantages of trading by concert. Thus it dawned upon the Metropolitan understanding that competition, held up as the nursing mother of all social blessings, had not proved itself to be that self-regulating and provident agency it was supposed to be. Certain members of the Civil Service therefore proposed a general revolt of customers in their body, against London shopkeepers, and devised an association consisting of two classes of members—members who were shareholders, and members who merely held tickets entitling them to make purchases at the stores. Some of the promoters of one association were considered to have acted with regard to their personal interest, in certain private contracts, concerning which the members were not consulted.<sup>1</sup> The general principle professed by all was co-operative, as far as it went, which was to supply the members with goods, at wholesale prices, with such addition as left a sufficient margin for managing expenses. The value of a share at death or withdrawal was fixed at 10s.

Shareholders of the C.S.S.A.<sup>2</sup> had prescribed to them the same advantage as members—namely, that of obtaining good articles at moderate prices without deriving profit from the transactions carried on in their name. This association soon came to have two places of business, one in the City, the

<sup>1</sup> At a public meeting in 1875, at which Sir Cecil Beardon presided, he said he had read the articles of the association and also the contracts, and was now ready to admit that there was a great deal to condemn in the articles. The contracts were not such as he should have agreed to if he had been on the board. When he looked at them he found that the contracts with the promoters had been cleverly drawn, and it was impossible to set them aside. Therefore, instead of going into legal proceedings, the issue of which could hardly be doubtful, he set himself to work, with assistance, to endeavour to abate the terms which had been agreed upon with Messrs. John Chisholme & Co., and the endeavour was not altogether unsuccessful. He had also used his influence with Mr. Bentley and Mr. Evans. Mr. Bentley had agreed to submit to any reduction of his commission which the board thought reasonable, and Mr. Evans had done the same. This related to the New Civil Service Store. At none of these London Stores is there openness and publicity of financial facts as there is in real co-operative societies.

<sup>2</sup> C.S.S.A. (Civil Service Supply Association) are the initials on the windows of the large building erected in Bedford Street, Covent Garden, by this Association, a vast well-built store of great completeness and convenience.

other in Long Acre ; each being a vast warehouse embracing almost every description of retail trade. During several years the association intercepted half a million of money on its way to the ordinary shopkeepers' tills. Of course care was taken that the addition made to the wholesale prices was prudently arranged to leave sufficient to prevent risk of loss. An excess of profit over working expenses thus accrued, which left every year an accumulating sum in the hands of the association. In a few years this amounted to more than £80,000, when stormy meetings were held to determine who should have this money. On the whole this association seems to have been governed by a committee of very honourable gentlemen, desirous of preventing it descending into a mere trading company, in which the shareholders make special profits at the expense of others. The committee were honourably in favour of applying the great balance in their hands to the reduction in the prices of the articles, by which every member would obtain advantages in proportion to his purchases. It was ultimately decided to distribute it among the shareholders, as was done among the same class in the old co-operative societies of the Pre-Constructive period.

The Haymarket store was a modest business-looking shop, tame in appearance, with the Royal Arms over the door, and a small brass plate on the entrance, bearing the words "Civil Service Co-operative Society." This is the principal provision store belonging to an association of gentlemen from every branch of the British Civil Service.

This Haymarket store is recorded <sup>1</sup> to have grown out of one commenced by certain clerks at the General Post Office in 1864. Lowness of salary, and serious charges on the part of grocers, were alleged as reasons for forming a combination against them. A strange circular was issued, calling upon members of the Civil Service generally to form a Co-operative Society. At the Post Office there were high officials—Sir Rowland Hill and Mr. W. H. Ashurst, the solicitor, who were both acquainted with the history of Co-operation. They were probably not consulted when it was first thought of, as the project was carried out in a far less complete way than persons so well informed might have advised. Members of the Civil

<sup>1</sup> *Saturday Review*.



Service generally did not then know Co-operation from Communism, nor were quite sure which was which, and the proposal was viewed with considerable disfavour by the majority of them. Periodicals and pamphlets, published in London, had oft told the marvellous story of co-operative profits in the North of England. Mr. Mill, in his "People's Edition of Political Economy," had borne powerful testimony to its significance. Competition was held to be the parent of all the advantages of the market, but the excesses of tradesmen's bills were felt to be a great price to pay for them, and eminent members of the Civil Service at length agreed to join in the revolt against them. Ultimately a board of directors was formed from each of the principal departments of the Crown. It was agreed to commence with a capital of £5,000 in £5 shares, bearing 5 per cent. interest, and no more. This was the Rochdale amount of shares and limit of interest; a good rule, though adopted originally from distrust of capitalists. The first store was opened near the General Post Office, and limited to members and their families. Purchasing members were required to pay a fee of 5s. annually for tickets not transferable, giving the power of buying at the store. The success of the Post Office Store extended the spirit of insurgency all over the Service, and a new society was opened in the Haymarket, by officials of the higher State Departments, who were joined in their rebellion by members in every branch of the Service—Home, Colonial, and Foreign; by peers, members of Parliament, bishops, judges, colonial governors, foreign consuls, and other high Government officials, who had never before regarded Co-operation otherwise than as the ignorant dream of dangerous visionaries.

The store tea was imported direct from tea-lands. With the purchasing ticket of the member was handed to the subscriber a book giving a detailed list of everything sold at the store itself, with price of each article annexed, a list of every merchant or tradesman with whom the association had dealings, and a catalogue of special articles sold by special tradesmen, advertisements of merchants on the society's list, and other information of considerable importance to members of the Civil Service abroad. The society had physicians, surgeons, accoucheurs, apothecaries, consulting counsel, solicitors, stock-



brokers—all of whom are well known in London as men of good standing in their several professions—who engaged to supply the wants of members of the society at a considerable reduction of their usual charges. The Provident Clerks' Life Insurance Association had an understanding also with the society by which members were insured at lower than ordinary rates. These operations arose in another London invention, to which, in courtesy, we may give the name of Floating Co-operation, which consists in inducing tradesmen to advertise in some store list of prices, or store journal, and in return customers at the store are invited to give their orders to him. The tradesman further undertakes to make a reduction in his prices to these customers. In some cases he also gives a commission to the store upon the orders he thus receives. If a tradesman gets a great accession of orders by this means, he can afford to sell as he would to a wholesale purchaser. The customer, in this case, has no security as to the quality or fairness of his bargain, which a co-operative store affords him. It is an unpleasant device at the best. If the customers are few, the tradesman gives them a poor welcome; and if he has two prices for his goods, he sometimes tries to discover if the customer has a co-operative ticket upon him before he names the lower price. The customer has probably heard that the reduction is often put on before it is taken off, and sometimes conceals what sort of purchaser he is until he has made his bargain. It seems a prostitution of the honest name of Co-operation to apply it to these furtive Pauline contrivances for economising expenditure by overcoming the tradesman "with guile." The attributes of Co-operation are equity, openness, and frank consent! None of these qualities are much present in this system of cheapening by connivance. Imitative Co-operation is hardly worth more notice than any other expedient by which trade is diversified without increasing public morality or amity among purchasers.

These details will give the reader a practical idea of the many sides on which shopkeepers and professional men were attacked at once. Carriers by land and sea, insurance companies, and all orders of men, were made to "stand and deliver" up some portion of the profits, which, from time immemorial, had been theirs. The English excel in insur-

rection when they once give their minds to it. Peers, bishops, members of Parliament, and gentlemen, when they commence it, put the poor and limited insurgency of working men to shame. Neither Communism nor Co-operation, in the hands of the people, has ever displayed this comprehensive rapacity. No working people ever broke so many ties with their neighbours. No friend of Co-operation wishes to see it advanced in this hasty and embittering way.

The poor are driven by necessity, and oft display an ignorant impatience of wrong which cannot be rectified at once. They precipitate themselves into change, and hope to find it improvement. But from the classes better off, who have larger means of deliberate action and more intelligence, there is to be expected some taste in advancement and that considerateness in progress which shall make it alluring—raising it from a brutal impetuosity to the level of high commerce.

Many a gentleman forsook the shopkeeper between whose family and his own friendly offices had been interchanged for generations. Peradventure father and grandfather before him had been honoured customers at the shop which he now clandestinely deserted. Had these gentlemen offered cash payments and given their orders themselves, or sent their wives in their carriages to do it, as they do at the Haymarket shop, they would have been served in many cases quite as cheaply, and with more courtesy than at the store of Imitative Co-operation. Co-operation is the necessity of the poor, it is not the necessity of gentlemen. When a shopkeeper cannot supply good articles, or will not make reasonable charges, or has no special knowledge of commodities, and pursues shop-keeping as a mere business and not as an art, customers of taste have no choice but to make a change. Some gentlemen, who have taken the part of leaders in this revolt of customers, have been actuated by the conviction that the middleman as an agent of distribution is mostly a costly instrument of obsolete commerce. They admit that where the retail dealer is also the manufacturer of his commodities, as in the case of many trades where the shopkeeper sells the productions of his own handicraft, he will always hold his place. He can guarantee the goodness of his materials, and his skill and ingenuity ought to speak for themselves. Where this is the

case, he will attract and keep customers despite all the Co-operation in the world. He needs no costly shop, customers will go in search of him anywhere. Work or product of any kind, which has the character of the artificer in it, will always be sought after so long as taste exists or honesty is valued. The mere middleman who has special knowledge of the nature of the articles or commodities in which he deals, and who has a character for honestly describing them, and of charging reasonably for goods to which his discernment and attestation add value, will always hold his place and command respect. But the class of mere mechanical middlemen and shopkeepers who do not know, and do not care, what they offer you, provided they can induce you to buy it, or who conspire to keep up prices by preventing the customer from finding any better article in the market, are mere parasites of trade, whom Co-operation serves society by sweeping away.

London Co-operation, as represented by Civil Service or Army and Navy Stores, has only the merit of saving somewhat the pockets of their customers, without affording them the facility and inducement to acquire the habit of saving, which is needed as much by the middle class as by the poor. These societies, organised chiefly to supply goods at a cheap rate, and make a large profit for the shareholders, are not co-operative in the complete sense of that term, since the managers have an interest distinct from the shareholders, and the shareholders an interest distinct from the purchasers. The managers are not known to care for Co-operation as a system of equity and honesty, and are not under the supervision of directors elected by the purchasers, and charged with the duty of carrying out the principle of Co-operation. Civil Service Stores, or Military Service Stores, and similar associations, are virtually private commercial societies bent upon realising the economy of combination without caring much about the morality of it. They do not intend to disregard morality any more than other commercial firms, but leave it to take care of itself and, peradventure, hope it will come all right. The managers generally have in view the highest remuneration they can obtain for themselves compatible with keeping the shareholders in a contented state of mind with regard to their dividend. The shareholders in their turn are chiefly solicitous

to see that purchasers have goods of such quality and at such prices as shall secure their custom. But whether the quality is as pure as it should be, or the prices as low as they might be, are not considerations which they have any interest in entertaining. These associations do not proceed so much upon the principle of equity as upon doing business. The common principle of managers, shareholders, and purchasers is that of all competitive commerce—each for himself and the devil take the hindmost ; and such is the activity of the devil in business, that he commonly does it. Co-operation, on the other hand, is a concerted arrangement for keeping the devil out of the affair. A scheme of equity has no foremost and no hindmost for the devil to take. Everybody in the society stands in a circle, and the total profits made are distributed equitably all round the circumference.

“London Co-operation” begins in distrust of the shop-keeper, and ends with obtaining, at considerable personal trouble, a reduction of a shilling in the pound at the store counter ; and if the purchaser can obtain the same reduction at the grocer’s shop, and the goods are equally satisfactory, there is no reason why he should not return to the shop and abandon the store. “London Co-operation” which most stirs the terrors of shopkeepers has small hold upon the interest or respect of its customers, beyond that which accrues from saving them a shilling in the pound. Under this cold and covetous plan the mighty phalanx of great stores throughout the country would never have existed. All the public would ever have seen would be a solitary big grocer’s shop here and there, mentioned, perhaps, by some commercial traveller in the commercial-room at night, but neither Parliament nor history would have heard of Co-operation. The great movement has grown in strength and in public interest by capitalising the savings of the customers. By Co-operation stores create a new system of distribution ; by productive societies, where profit is shared with labour, it aims at changing the character of industry by substituting self-employment for hired labour.

Imitative Co-operation, so far as it may assist the incomes of some struggling middle-class persons, poorly-paid civil servants, law, and mercantile clerks, is an advantage. In so far as these shadowy stores call the attention of the more



influential classes to Co-operation, and interest them in it, and induce them to countenance the co-operative principle, they do good and are part of the general propagandism of the idea of economy by concert. Such praise as belongs to this order of service I ungrudgingly give, but there is no use in making more of anything than there is in it ; and if a scheme is good as far as it goes but falls short of what it should be, and fails to do the good it ought, that should be made clear in the interest of progress.

Thus there are two kinds of stores, the market-price charging and saving stores, and the Civil Service under-selling and unsaving stores. The market-price and saving store belongs to real Co-operation, which is a device for the improvement of the condition of the poor. In the provinces the sort of supply association which the Civil Service stores have brought into imitative existence are often mere schemes of gentlemen at large, for intercepting the profits of tradesmen, for the benefit of shareholders and persons of position, who turn amateur huxters for a pecuniary consideration. Among the "patrons" or "directors" whose names are published there is scarcely one familiar to the co-operative ears. They know nothing of Co-operation—possibly care nothing for it. They cannot explain its principles nor advocate them, nor vindicate them. In its struggles they have taken no part, nor rendered any aid. In its difficulties they have given it no encouragement, nor made any sacrifices to support it. In the days when adversaries abounded, they stood aloof. When Co-operation has been regarded with odium they disowned it. In all its literature, their speeches or writings in its defence are nowhere to be found. When Acts of Parliament had to be obtained, at the infinite labour and cost of years of agitation, they took no part, and gave no thought, or time, or trouble to conquer the reluctance of the House of Commons for facilitating the formation of societies, or concede them legal protection.

There is no reason, of course, why those who did not do what they ought, or what they might, should not be applauded for doing what they did in the right direction. A co-operative society proper divides whatever savings it makes among all its customers who buy from it, and employés, who



can do so much for its interest; an Imitative Co-operation merely gives partial reduction in price to the purchaser, and awards the remainder as personal profit to managers or directors, to promoters or patrons.

An original co-operative store permanently increases the means of the poor, by saving their profits for them and teaching them the art of thrift. An imitative store does nothing more than cultivate the love of cheapness without providing security that the cheapness is real.

An original store, by augmenting the means of humble purchasers, prevents them becoming a burden upon the poor-rates and a tax upon shopkeepers. An imitative store renders little service to the indigent, and by abstracting the custom of the tradesman, reduces his means of paying the poor-rates which fall upon him.

At the same time since the better class of London stores have stopped credit purchases, and enabled the public to obtain articles at a lower rate than otherwise they could obtain them, they have raised the expectation that the articles they supply can be depended upon to be good of their kind, and to raise this expectation is useful, as it imposes a certain obligation or meeting it, and so far as the London stores accomplish these things, they may claim credit for usefulness, and are to be regarded for the merit they have. As copyists of Co-operation they are entitled to "honourable mention" according to their skill.

It would be no more fair in commerce than in literature to judge any one by some other standard than that which he has set before himself. A critic oftentimes condemns an author because his book does not come up to some ideal in the critic's mind of what such a book ought to be. This is not criticism, it is dogmatism. A writer, or a social contriver, is not to be condemned for falling below a model which he never proposed to imitate. If the model he has chosen is a poor one or an unworthy one, it is plainly useful to say so, that nobler attempts may be incited in him or others. A trader in ideas or commodities is to be estimated mainly by the good sense and good services to be found in the work he actually does. The leading aim of Co-operation is not merely to increase present comfort (albeit not a disagreeable thing to do),

it seeks also to ensure competence. Those who do not provide for the future of themselves and families, as far as they can—or far as they ought<sup>1</sup> are not merely dependent, they are mean, since they leave to chance, or the charity of others, to provide for them when the evil day comes. The middle and upper classes are not much better than the working classes in these respects. Noblemen quarter their families on the State, and a Conservative Government (unless it is much misjudged) is always ready to find them facilities to that end, in the ecclesiastical, military, and maritime departments, and by keeping in their hands the school endowments of the poor. Noblemen have no general reputation for paying their debts when due. Industry is considered a plebeian pursuit, and the middle class ape a gentility of indebtedness which their creditors are far from approving.

In a society on the Rochdale plan the profit due to the purchaser is, by arrangement, saved for him. The society becomes to him a Savings Bank. He finds himself surrounded by members and neighbours who have £20, £50, £100, and some £200 in the society, intending to invest it in buying a house, or investing it in some co-operative quarry, or mine, or manufactory.

In what is called “London Co-operation,” as represented by Civil Service and similar societies, no facility of saving in the way we have described is afforded, though in thousands of families of the middle class, and indeed in many of those of the wealthier classes, the facility would be as valuable as in the households of working people. In co-operative families, when the father or mother begins to save in this way, the example spreads through the house. The young people learn to save. They see the advantage of possessing money of their own, at their own control, and acquire a spirit of wholesome independence because they owe everything to themselves. This saving costs them no privation; they lose no comfort to effect their accumulations. They have simply to make all their small purchases at a store, and the small profits they would distribute among the shopkeepers about them come at the end of the quarter into their own pockets. Sometimes these young

<sup>1</sup> For instance, no one is bound to provide for his family so far as to relieve them of the duty of self-exertion.

co-operators persuade their friends, who do not belong themselves to any store, to let them make their purchases for them. These purchases, entrusted to these minor co-operators, cost nothing to those who give them, and the youthful commissioners learn thrift and gain by the opportunity, and become little millionaires in their own estimation.

In co-operative families the sons and daughters commonly become members on their own account. The young men learn other economies, avoiding needless and wasteful pleasures which they would never otherwise avoid, and are the better in their habits and health in consequence ; and when the time for setting up households of their own arrives, they often have a house of their own to go into. It is found that young women are often as clever as their brothers in saving, when their minds are well put in the way of it. Many a girl has found herself sought for in marriage by a better class of suitor than would ever have fallen in her way, had it not been discovered that she had a fund of her own in the co-operative store. The certainty that a prudent girl will make a prudent wife, and be the mistress of a prudent household, is a popular belief which acts as an unsolicited letter of recommendation to her. If it can be shown that persons can save without laying anything by, accumulate money without paying anything out of their pocket, and save without living any way poorer, or meaner than they did, this were surely to make saving easy, alluring, and inevitable. This is the moral, social, and salutary discovery which co-operative societies have made. Future advantage seems to most persons a poor thing compared with present satisfaction. Many only half believe in the need of a future day, which comes as surely as death ; and often they both come together. A co-operative store dispenses with this scant, difficult, and precarious heroism of daily life, without requiring the strength of mind which looks the future in the face, and provides for it. A co-operative store offers means of saving without effort. No homily, no precept, no wise saw, or modern instance, no exhortation, or prayer, or entreaty, inspire strength of will or wise and lasting purpose in the average mind of any class, like facility alone brought to their doors, put into their hands, saving made part of the very convenience of their daily life, which Co-operation furnishes,

effects the change from thoughtlessness to thrift, as no other human device has ever been found to do.<sup>1</sup>

The press is at times as confusing as the pulpit.<sup>2</sup> Surely it is idle to say (as other political economists as eminent as Professor Hodgson have said) that if a man saves 2s. in the pound in a purchase it makes no difference to him whether he receives the money weekly or at the end of the quarter; he has the money in his pocket, and if he wants to save it he can do so. This is a mad theory of human conduct, as it implies that all men are perfect, that all minds are prudent, and bent upon prudence always; that the advantages and fine spirit of self-providence is present to the mind of every one, and present unintermittingly. It implies that opportunity of some gratification, which betrays nine out of every ten, every wakeful hour of their lives, can be set aside and disregarded at will. It implies that omnipresent strength of purpose which the philosopher extols as the perfection of character, which he never expects to see prevalent; which no Utopian ever dreams will be universal—is to be found in every one, and found always. If men could be trusted to save because they have the means of doing so, insurance societies would be impertinencies, since every man could more or less provide for himself if he took care of his means when he has them. All the laws and all the devices of social life, to protect the thoughtless from themselves, and to prevent temptation from destroying the foolish or the weak, would be unnecessary. Thus the com-

<sup>1</sup> This was admitted lately at Oxford, where dogmatic theology has been much better cared for than social morality. At the opening of Keble College, the Marquis of Salisbury said, "There never was a time in which frugality required to be so much preached to the educated classes of this country"; and Lord Selborne praised the arrangements of the College as a means, much needed, of protecting young students from pernicious indifference to "debt."

<sup>2</sup> The *Standard*, when it did not understand Co-operation, confounded the London version of it with the Rochdale plan, thus wrote contemptuously of the many moralities of the genuine store:—"The worst mistake into which the 'Co-operative leaders' seem to have fallen, is, that of over-estimating the importance of their retail grocery business. Playing at shop is a favourite amusement with children, and the managers of co-operative stores have carried out that innocent pursuit on a colossal scale with this useful result—that a number of ladies who have plenty of time on their hands succeed in procuring marmalade and Worcester sauce at a visible saving in pence; but it is nonsense to imagine that the co-operative stores can do more towards the regeneration of the world than is involved in the partial cheapening of groceries and the wholesome lesson thereby imparted to ordinary tradesmen" (*Standard*, June 4, 1869).



pulsory thrift of Co-operation is one of the most necessary and beneficent features of that wise self-helping scheme.

Cobden held the theory that nothing would be so popular as a newspaper distinguished for furnishing facts. No paper ever lived long enough to succeed in this adventurous department. The cost of getting at facts is enormous. They are as scarce as gold. The most valuable facts commonly lie very low down, and are as uncertain to find, and costly to get at, as boring for coal in an unexplored field. So difficult are they to find that men are celebrated as discoverers who first produce facts in art, or politics; in science, or social life; and when found it requires a man of genius to identify them and interpret them. Ordinary people do not know what to do with them. In a West End district in London, where needy or thoughtless people are not expected to abound, there is a pawnbroker's shop where 2,000 pledges are redeemed every Saturday night and 400 new pledges are brought in. Pawnbrokers' shops are the humble banks of the poor, who, when sudden sickness or distress overtakes them, or a journey has to be made to a dying child or parent, indigent women can there obtain a little money when they have no friend to lend them any, and only possess some wearing apparel, or wedding ring, which they can give up in exchange for money. These cases, however, represent a very small portion of that great crowd whose folly, or vice, or improvidence make up the 2,400 applicants who, in one night, throng the pawnbroker's shop we have indicated. What an ignominious crowd to contemplate! Two or three co-operative stores in that neighbourhood would do more to thin the deplorable throng than all the moralists, philosophers, professors of political economy, and preachers London could furnish. These stores ought to be promulgated by missionary zeal, and men might give themselves to the work, as to a great religious duty.

If gentlemen had taken to co-operative trading with a view to elevate it, and improve shopkeeping by improving the taste of purchasers, by the gradual introduction of becoming colours and qualities, and articles of honest manufacture, no words of honour would be too strong to apply to such amateur shopkeepers. Some years ago I made an appeal<sup>1</sup> to the piety of

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* letter to *Pall Mall Gazette*.



London to do something practical in the name of faith. A few congregations in every district of the far-extending metropolis might unite in setting up a good co-operative store. If deacons, elders, lady visitors, and local missionaries were to visit the poor of the neighbourhood with half as much interest in the welfare of their bodies as that they display for the health of their souls, they would soon have thousands of poor members at their co-operative store. If they saved the profits of the poor for them, and encouraged them to permit the slow accumulation, they would teach them in time the holy art of thrift and independence. If the wealthy members chose to deal at the stores and save their profits, not for the baser reason of adding to already sufficient gains, but for the purpose of devoting them to works of art, or to that charity which helps the unfortunate and does not make mendicants, they might do good with dignity, and do it without cost.

## CHAPTER XXVI

## METROPOLITAN PROPAGANDISM

"I regard social schemes as one of the most valuable elements of human improvement."—JOHN STUART MILL, *Political Economy*.

LONDON has started more co-operative societies and projects than any city ten times told. If it has not succeeded with them, it has enabled others to do so. It may be held that it has had real co-operative enthusiasm and enterprise. Somebody must go forward with an ideal, which the "practical" people carry out, but rarely have the capacity to discover for themselves; and when they succeed, they are apt to disparage the thinkers who inspired them.

The vicissitudes of Co-operation in the metropolis would be an instructive narrative in itself. In several parts of England societies formed in the Pioneer period, and before it, continue to exist. In London no society formed in those days has continued. There was an intermittent platform advocacy of it at the old Hall of Science, City Road (rented mainly by Mr. Mordan, of gold-pen repute, for Mr. Rowland Detroiser to lecture in), when physical science really was taught there; and industrial advocacy was continuous and incessant on the platform at the John Street Institution, Tottenham Court Road, and at the Cleveland Hall, hard by, for a time. Indeed, in every hall—in Theobald's Road, Gray's Inn Road, in Goswell Road, Islington, Whitechapel, Hackney, Blackfriars Road, in the Rotunda in the days of Carlile, Queen Street, Charlotte Street, at Castle Street, Oxford Street, and subsequently at the new Hall of Science, in Old Street, St. Luke's, and in every Free Thought or Secular Hall which has been occupied

in the metropolis—co-operative advocacy has more or less been heard.

It was in London that the "British Association for the Diffusion of Co-operative Knowledge" was formed. It is the tendency of the metropolis to think more of disseminating true ideas than to profit by them. The tone of the metropolitan mind is imperial. Thinkers strive to act from London upon the empire. The best ideas do not often originate in London, but they receive a welcome there. Through the kindness of Dr. Yeats there has come to my hands "The Report of the Committee appointed by a Meeting of Journeymen, chiefly Printers," to consider the first systematic plan of Co-operation known to have been proposed. The plan was that of Mr. George Mudie. The second edition of the Report is dated January 23, 1821. The Report first appeared in 1820, and it speaks of having been long under consideration, so that as early as 1818 or 1819 Co-operation, as a "plan of arrangement" for working people, was formally put forth. Mr. Mudie is spoken of as having delivered discourses thereupon in the metropolis. Mr. Mudie's scheme was that of a community of goods; but the Committee proposed to adapt its co-operative features to friendly societies and working-men's clubs, which was done in 1821, and was the beginning of co-operative societies in London. The Report was signed by Robert Hunt, James Shallard, John Jones, George Hinde, Robert Dean, and Henry Hetherington. The Report is the ablest, least sentimental, the most clearly written and exhaustive—touching community schemes and co-operative application—I have met with in the early literature of the movement.

One passage, which expresses the first conception formed of that practical Co-operation which we now know, will enable the reader to judge this remarkable Report. "It appears to us that the principle of Co-operation is susceptible of many modifications. In some cases its benefits could only be partially obtained. Wherever Friendly Societies or Benefit Clubs exist, the members would do well to form themselves into associations for reaping the advantages of this plan. In some cases it might be merely practicable to unite a portion of their earnings, for the purchase in the best markets, of certain articles of provision or clothing; while in other cases where the parties inhabit

contiguous dwellings, some of the advantages resulting from the subdivision of domestic labour might also be secured, and erections adapted for the purposes of cooking and washing be made at the back of one or more of the dwellings at a small expense.<sup>1</sup> If men can be brought seriously and earnestly to consider how they can unite their talents, experiences, and pecuniary resources to attain advantages in which each should equitably participate, they will assuredly succeed in improving their condition; and if by any economical arrangements the earnings of individuals in question can be made to produce a greater quantity of articles of consumption than is to be obtained on the plan of each individual catering for his own family, the effect will be the same as would follow an increase of wages or a decrease of taxes."

The Home Colonisation Society, of which Mr. William Galpin was the chief promoter, and to which Mr. Frederick Bate was the chief subscriber, was formed in London twenty years later, 1840-1. The first Central Board of the Society had offices in the metropolis for some years in Bloomsbury Square, and the *New Moral World* was printed by Ostell, round the corner in Hart Street.

The Christian Socialists of London took the field on behalf of Co-operation, 1848-9. The higher aims they put before and kept before co-operators<sup>2</sup> have made their influence the most fortunate which has befallen the movement. It was in Charlotte Street, which Mr. Owen had previously made famous, that the barristers' and clergymen's co-operative movement commenced, the said Christian Socialist organisation of a Central Co-operative Agency and Working Men's Associations. Having fortune, learning, and influence, they attracted important attention to the subject, and issued publications explanatory of their intentions. With generosity and zeal and at great cost, the work was conducted.

From 1850 to 1855 attempts were made in London to establish a Wholesale Supply Association, under the name of the Universal Purveyor, for the manufacture, preparation, and sale of food, drinks, and drugs, guaranteed against adulteration and fraud, and just in purity, quality, weight, measure, and

<sup>1</sup> Baths and washing-houses were not invented then.

<sup>2</sup> See Lecture to the Guild of Co-operators, Exeter Hall, London, by Thomas Hughes, Q.C., 1878.

price. The commencing capital was £10,000 in 1,000 shares of £10. The project lasted in force but a few years. M. Jules le Chevalier St. Andre, formerly a St. Simonian enthusiast, but not at all an enthusiast in London, but a very obese and accomplished projector, was concerned in both these schemes. The chief supporter of the Purveyor was the Rev. C. Marriott, who at that time was Dean of Oriel, Oxford. He was certainly a clergyman of great disinterestedness, who ran great pecuniary risks, and incurred several losses to serve others. M. St. Andre had a masterly way of putting a case which would interest a clergyman like Charles Marriott. It was not until after much money had been lost in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, and the business there was ended, that M. St. Andre commenced his "Universal Purveyor" at 23, King William Street. In one of his last circulars he said, "The most obstructive difficulty was inherent to the state of the English law, whereby it was not possible to take part in any enterprise, admitting of some risk, without being entrapped, as it were, into *unlimited* responsibility. The unalterable faith in God, which has supported me through all the apparent hopelessness of a righteous cause, strengthens in me every day more and more the belief that by coming forward personally as trustee, and financially with every means he could place at my disposal, the Rev. C. Marriott has laid the foundation of an institution pregnant of important results. The Rev. C. Marriott was perfectly aware that as a trustee he would have been made responsible with us. But there was no other means of doing what he thought his duty, and he did it. Thank God, he has come out safe, after enabling us to reach the time when the principle of limited liability has been introduced in the English law."

All that relates to Mr. Marriott was true and most honourable to him. What it cost him to "come out safe" is not stated. Gentlemen more experienced in the world, and more in it than Mr. Marriott, had found that "an unalterable trust in God," while very well in its place, may be very costly in business, unless accompanied by secular qualifications. St. Andre well knew this, and also understood what a Wholesale Agency should be, and his description of it is worth preserving. Its conditions were these:—



1. An extent of operations embracing the supply of all articles for domestic consumption. 2. Making the guarantee of purity, quality, quantity, and fair price the special duty and responsibility of the establishment. 3. Selling on commission only, and not making any speculative profits. 4. Extensive warehouses for examining and testing the goods before packing and delivery. 5. The most perfect machinery for weighing, packing, and labelling large quantities of parcels of every description. 6. Organisation of a Commission of Referees, composed of professional men of the highest standing. 7. Appointed buyers, morally responsible to the public. 8. A strong body of respectable servants as clerks, travellers, packers, warehousemen, pledged to certain modes of dealing, thoroughly impressed with the fact that they are on public duty.<sup>1</sup>

Years after the disappearance of the Working Men's Associations founded by the Christian Socialists, I and Mr. E. R. Edger held meetings at "The Raglan" (Mr. Jagger's coffee-house), 71, Theobald's Road. The object of these meetings was to suggest a plan of combined action for all the London stores, and to invite their co-operation in circulating an address to the people with the object of increasing the members and custom of every store. There were then some twenty or thirty stores in London, scattered and isolated. Mr. Ebenezer Edger, Mr. E. O. Greening, and I published the *Social Economist*, 1868, for the purpose of promoting organisation among these stores; Mr. Edger wrote a wise series of tracts for circulation among the members. By the generous aid of a munificent friend of Co-operation—always nameless, but incessant in service—Mr. Greening and I continued, in London, the *Social Economist*, which for a considerable period sought to inform co-operators of the nature of Continental thought, as respects the organisation of social life and labour. It was subsequently discontinued on behalf of the *Co-operative News*, that there might be unity and greater interest in the new journal then projected. A "London Association for the Promotion of Co-operation" was in operation in 1863. Mr. J. S. Mill, Professor F. W. Newman, and Mr. E.

<sup>1</sup> Neither the Christian Socialists with whom he was first connected nor I, who had later relations with him, had any idea that he was a spy in pay of the French Emperor, as appeared when the people came into possession of his papers in the Tuileries.

Vansittart Neale permitted their names to be announced as honorary members. The committee was composed of officers of these existing co-operative societies. It was stated by this body that there were at that time "forty societies in London and its vicinity."

The establishment of the Agricultural and Horticultural Co-operative Association in London devised by Mr. Edward Owen Greening, Mr. Walter Morrison, M.P., Thomas Hughes, M.P., and the Hon. Mr. Cowper-Temple, M.P., other gentlemen being directors, gave practical Co-operation position in the metropolis. The progress of this association is as remarkable as that of any society extant, considering that it occupied an entirely new field, and sought members among the farmers of England, who do not take readily to new ideas. Mr. E. O. Greening, the manager, being possessed of real co-operative knowledge, skilled in devising new applications of it, and of zeal and capacity in advocacy, exercised considerable propagandist influence in London. This Agricultural Association has maintained a standard of co-operative principle which has been effective upon the Civil Service societies in some instances. Mr. Greening and others caused the formation of a Co-operative Institute in Castle Street, in a large building formerly the Concert Room of the Princess's Theatre, Oxford Street. The names of Thomas Brassey, M.P., the Earl of Rosebery, and Arthur Trevelyan appear among the promoters, in addition to other well-known friends of industrial endeavour, as Walter Morrison, Charles Morrison, and the Right Hon. Cowper-Temple, M.P. The *Daily News* gave a comprehensive account of it, saying: "This Co-operative Institute is not, as might be inferred from the name, a trading company, but a society formed to organise the means of pure and elevating enjoyment, members' subscriptions being applied to educational or recreative purposes. . . . It provides the advantages of lectures, concerts, the use of Mudie's books, a reading-room, and, as far as possible, the usual adjuncts of a club. There are occasionally social evenings for dancing, but no intoxicants are permitted, and admission is limited to members." The Central Co-operative Board and some societies made subscriptions to it.

A Central Co-operative Agency Society, Limited, was established in London for the sale of co-operative manufactures

and provisions, wholesale and retail. An excellent thing is at times set going, but few devote themselves to seeing it go and taking care that it does go.

The Agricultural Association built a council-room in Millbrook Street; the Central Board of the Southern Section sat there and devised a Metropolitan Co-operative Society, one object being to open stores in suitable districts. These stores were to be supplied with provisions from the Manchester Wholesale. So comprehensive a scheme was impossible before the Branch of the Manchester Wholesale was opened at 118, Minories, now 99, Leman Street, London. Mr. William Openshaw is now the manager.

Since 1875 the proceedings of the Annual Congress have been regulated by the laws of a Co-operative Union adopted at the London Congress in that year. This Union prescribes the conditions under which societies may become members of it, and send delegates to it. It appoints a Central Board which officially governs the proceedings of the united co-operative body. Sectional Boards meet in various districts. Delegates from each of these Boards meet periodically in Manchester to transact the general business of the Union under the name of the United Board.

"This Union is formed to promote the practice of truthfulness, justice, and economy in production and exchange—

"(1) By the abolition of all false dealing, either—

"*a. Direct*, by representing any article produced or sold to be other than what it is known to the producer or vendor to be; or

"*b. Indirect*, by concealing from the purchaser any fact known to the vendor material to be known by the purchaser, to enable him to judge of the value of the article purchased.

"(2) By conciliating the conflicting interests of the capitalist, the worker, and the purchaser, through an equitable division among them of the fund commonly known as *Profit*.

"(3) By preventing the waste of labour, now caused by unregulated competition.

"[The Union does not affect to determine precisely what division of this fund shall be considered *equitable*, believing that this is a question admitting of different solutions, under different circumstances, and not to be concluded by any hard-and-fast line. But it insists on the recognition of the principle.]"

Mr. Hodgson Pratt, a ceaseless worker for social improvement, not merely doing with zeal what routine work may come before him in the movements he assists, but assiduously devising new methods of advancing the objects in view, projected a Co-operative Guild for the purpose of creating an organised propagandism of principles of Industrial Association. At the Glasgow Congress of 1876 it was first agreed to form a Guild on the plan of the ancient societies of that name. It was proposed by myself to give effect to a striking paper on Propagandism read by Mr. Joseph Smith, secretary to the Manchester Board. The draft of the Guild was signed by G. J. Holyoake, A. Greenwood, W. Nuttall, J. Smith, E. V. Neale, J. Crabtree, J. M. Percival, H. J. Wiley.

This "Guild of Co-operative Pioneers" was intended to comprise a Master of the Guild, and (1) Associates examined in Co-operative Principle; (2) Companions examined in Methods of Co-operative Procedure; (3) Administrators examined in the Government of Societies; (4) Members examined in policy and debate in Societies and Congress. The object of this Guild was to train a body of persons in every town who should possess usefulness and authority, by reason of their known devotion and ascertained qualifications.

Mr. Hodgson Pratt's scheme was originated quite independently. It commenced in March, 1878, after a series of four lectures in Exeter Hall; the first being delivered by Thomas Hughes, Q.C., on the History of Co-operation, Mr. Hodgson Pratt presiding.

Spurious Co-operation became a fashion in London with pretended "Co-operative Shops." A single adventurer multiplied himself into a Firm, and announced himself as a "Co-operative Company." Fictitious "Co-operative Banks" made their appearance. Mr. Richard Banner Oakley failed in many attempts to get the Congress to recognise him, or the Central Board, or the *Co-operative News* to countenance his operations. No store ever had dealings with him. The outside public, from treating Co-operation with ignorant distrust, at last believed in it with an ignorant credulity. When he invented his Co-operative Credit Bank, papers spoke of it as an instance of "Co-operative credulity," whereas



the co-operators were the only persons who had no faith in it.

There was a Co-operative Coal Society in Chancery Lane, London, managed by Mr. Julius Forster. Deficiency of fuel means increased contagion, premature death to the old, and privation in many ways. To help to avert this, in the days of the coal famine, the Co-operative Coal Supply Association held a Conference in Millbank Street Hall, to promote co-operative coal-mining. In the North of England the working miners had then taken some coal royalties, and, with secured orders from London, they could work them with profit.

The Manchester Co-operative Fire Insurance Society (which has shown a growing prosperity for years), of which Mr. James Odgers is secretary, has its head office in Long Millgate, Manchester. This Society, commenced in 1872, also issues Guarantees of Fidelity of Servants of Co-operative Societies. It has also a Life Department.

It is one of the pleas for the inability of London to co-operate that the population is transitory. Still householders remain pretty constant. Population, which seems fluctuating under facilities of transit and emigration, resembles the deposits at a bank. Though withdrawable on demand a profitable proportion of money always remains on hand. It is the same with workmen. Great numbers expect to live in the place in which they were born or have settled; as witness the statements made at the meeting of "The British Association"<sup>1</sup> at Bradford in 1873, that the following building societies,<sup>2</sup> composed mainly of working people, had these members and income in 1872:—

Title of Society.	Members.	Funds.
Bradford Second Equitable ... ..	6,277	£ 265,000
Bradford Third Equitable ... ..	7,200	537,000
Leeds Permanent ... ..	12,020	365,000
Leeds Provincial ... ..	5,250	200,000
Halifax Permanent ... ..	6,167	174,000

<sup>1</sup> The association of the eight-worded name "for the advancement of science."

<sup>2</sup> The five societies are those cited by Mr. A. Binns at Bradford.



These masses of membership do not look like a flying population. If as much interest was taken in co-operative as in religious propagandism, and a hundred members of any congregation were to guarantee to buy not less than £1 worth of goods weekly from its store, the storekeepers might undertake to contribute £1,000 every four years to the income of the Church.

## CHAPTER XXVII

## SOCIAL POLICY OF CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES

“ He neither power nor places sought,  
 For *others* not himself he fought.  
 He might have been a king,  
 But that he understood  
 How much it was a meaner thing  
 To be unjustly great—than honourably good.”  
*The Duke of Buckingham's Epitaph on Lord Fairfax.*

THE noblest scheme of liberty or set of rules in the world will be dead letters unless men with a passion for the right carry them out. The right men are known by the policy they pursue. Some men profess not to know what policy is. Yet they know that if a man wishes to appear superior to his neighbours without trouble, his policy is not to work. If his intention is not to work, his policy is to live by borrowing as less dangerous but not less dishonest than stealing. But if a man intends to live by industry and to get on by good sense, he adopts certain rules of probity and usefulness, and integrity and service constitute his policy.

Co-operation implies a training in the unknown art of association. The earlier advocates of industrial equity had everything to learn, and to fight their way step by step in the shop, in the market, on the platform, and in the press. The instructed seldom befriended them, and adversaries never gave them quarter. In this solitary contention they discovered some facts of the policy of success.

1. Never to conceal what ought, in business, honestly to be made known, nor communicate to assailants outside business, what is no business of theirs.

Catlin tells us that the astute American Indian always keeps his mouth shut, until he has some purpose in opening it ; and the Indian mother watches her boy while he sleeps, carefully closing his lips, if apart, that he may acquire the habit of keeping them shut night and day, as audible breathing may one day betray him in his lair. There are men in every movement who always have their mouths open. It may be owing to mere labial deficiency, or to their having had parents who knew nothing of the importance of educated habit ; but to the spectator it seems a sign of vacuity or foolishness. Some of the early Socialists had this peculiarity, not from physical but intellectual deficiency in the power of reticence. Speech escaped from them without calculation of its relevancy or use. Co-operation still suffers from a suicidal publicity. If some rival firm refuses to sell to them provisions or materials they go to the expense of printing a circular about it, or put it in a paper and circulate the fact that they are disabled from carrying on their business. They thus cause adversaries to combine against them, and then squeal out when the pressure is put upon them, although they inform their own connection that they are disabled ; thus they minister to the personal triumph as well as business success of their clever and reticent adversaries, who know better how to close their mouths and work in the shade. Co-operators know that competition is a battle in which there are few scruples and no quarter, and yet many of them chatter as though it was a tea-party. It is the same in Radicalism, where publicity is a disease instead of a purpose. It is the malady of inexperience. Conservative working men are as bad when they are allowed to speak. What matters it to co-operators if the enemy close the markets where they must purchase provisions to distribute, or materials with which to conduct productive manufactures ? This can be overcome in commerce and trade by establishing wholesale societies, and entering the markets with means of making large purchases. Theological alarm is far more implacable than that of business. Defamation is conveyed down a thousand devious lines of prejudice, where stately and friendless truth is too proud, too scornful, or too poor to follow it ; and there it lives till Time starves it, or the contempt of a second and better-instructed generation kills it.

2. The co-operator makes no proclamation as to his religious opinions, and treats any demand of the kind as a social outrage. Religion, in the sense of reverence for truth, is confined to a few persons in every generation. With this religion of the understanding Co-operation is wholly coincident. The most human parts of the Bible are those which express sympathy for the poor. Co-operation respects this sympathy, but objects to being poor, and holds that there is neither need, nor use, nor good in being poor. When a man discovers that the established measurement of truth is wrong, and announces one more accurate, men put him down as being no better than he should be, which merely means that he is nearer to the reality of things than his neighbours.

3. Self-helping in all things, the co-operator chooses his own principles, and answers for them himself. The poorer sort of persons with new ideas are eager to have them discussed. It is their only chance of getting attention. To accomplish this they must uphold the principle of free discussion. Yet discussion once sanctioned in any party, all sorts of questions are raised, and the responsibility of the opinions advanced is, in a manner, diffused over the whole party who uphold the principle. Hence Co-operation, in its early days, was charged with complicity with every utopianism of the hour, discussed in its halls, or advocated by its supporters. Of course this mistake would not be made about it, if the public discriminated ; but the public is a creature which never does discriminate. Not only do co-operators suffer from misconception, but philosophers suffer from it. John Stuart Mill was a memorable instance of this ; because he wrote letters on behalf, or on some occasions gave support to, persons whose views the public did not like, it was assumed that Mr. Mill did like them. This did not by any means follow. Mr. Mill believed that progress needed to be promoted, and that it was retarded by persons not saying what they thought right, and by not acting upon it when they had said it. He therefore encouraged this being done, without at all agreeing with the particular views of each individual, or his mode of carrying them out.

The men who inspired the co-operative movement, who believed in it when no one else did, whose intrepidity and

persistence have been the cause of its success, were men who held no second-hand opinions, but debated out for themselves what they sought to know, and had to depend upon. So vigilant were they that they never suffered any speaker to address an audience in their name, unless he submitted what he said to criticism and opportunity of refutation. They regarded as a deceiver or a traitor any who sought to impose upon them opinions he did not invite them to verify and enable them to do it.

4. To regard every member as actuated by veracity and right intentions, and in case of difference of opinion to reason with them as being in error—not as being base. So solicitous were the early co-operators for neutrality in imputation that they prohibited all praise or blame, in order that the mind being kept passionless, might move in the equable plane of simple truth. Certainly no signs of approval or disapproval kept a speaker quiet, but it made him dull. He never knew whether he was a fool or a wit. He might as well have addressed so many bales of cotton, as a neutral audience of social improvers of this way of thinking. Other and wiser exactions were made. Whoever spoke among them was forbidden to be imputative. He was told to pity the vituperative assailant (to whom neither Nature nor culture had given sense or taste) not to imitate him. Thirty years before Mr. Matthew Arnold pointed out that Paul, when he called his adversaries “dogs” and “vain babblers,” had no chance of convincing them, nor had Christ any chance of gaining the Scribes and Pharisees by the invectives he launched at them when he abandoned his mild, uncontentious, winning mode of working. “*He shall not strive or cry*” was his true characteristic, in which all his charm and power lay. Thirty years ere this was said co-operators were taught consideration in speech, and it was known among them that denunciation of persons was the cheapest, easiest, most popular, and most unwholesome use to which the human tongue could be put, and that the wanton imputation of evil motives to others was an abuse of free speech. Defamation of motives assume an infallibility of discernment which no man is endowed with, and denotes utter ignorance of the duty of exposition and of the art of persuading the minds of men.



Those who seek the truth, and care for the truth, are traitors to it when they employ unfairness of terms. He who is imputative and unjust of speech, turns men from him for ever, and is not long credited himself with purity of motive. So sharply should consequence be connected with conduct, that a brutal sincerity should be held as much a betrayal of the truth as the denial of it; for he who denies it merely hides it, while he who makes it offensive makes it to be hated. The moment an unjust imputation is made ill-feeling begins, and the wisdom or error of any step is at once lost sight of. The moment personalities are permitted, the tongue of every fool is loosened, and floods of resentment and rancour drown all argument and arrest all concert.

Mr. John Holmes, who has published some wise conditions of co-operative success, errs in one where he prescribes, "Forbearance towards each other's *disinterested* opinions." Now co-operators have nothing to do with the question whether the opinions of their colleagues are *interested* or "disinterested," but simply with the truth and value of their opinions. Any question as to the motives or "disinterestedness" of the opinions is the beginning of disunion and of imputation, which kills concord.

A hearty geniality is of great value in co-operative societies. A business watchfulness which never sleeps, and a pleasantry of manner which never fails, are qualities above all value in a co-operator in office. His smile is a public gift, the tone of his voice is an act of friendship. A hard man, with a sharp tongue and a short temper, is a local misfortune, diffusing discomfort wherever he treads. I know entire towns which never had a genial man in them—where every speech is an attack, every suggestion a suspicion, and every meeting a conflict. Co-operation in these places is always rheumatic and unhappy—labouring under a sort of suppressed social gout. Not that I object to grumblers; if they have any sense they are an uncomfortable kind of benefactors. No English society would do without them. They act as a sort of Spanish muleteer—they prick slow animals with long ears over rough places. It must be confessed they are rather apt to overdo it, and make the patient, steady-working, good-natured animal bolt, and then they ruin everything.

5. To constantly remember that there is no one, not a fool, who would not be wiser and better than he is, had he the choice ; and that the disagreeable, the wrong-headed, and the base are to be regarded as unfortunate rather than hateful. Leigh Hunt well expressed this when he said, "Let us agree to consider the errors of mankind as proceeding more from defect of knowledge than defect of goodness." Those who learned this, and those alone, have given permanence to the co-operative movement. Those who never knew it, or who, knowing it, have forgotten it, flounder for ever between hatred and hope.

Long before the Welsh reformer, Robert Owen, was born, Goldsmith had said, without censure, that "had Cæsar or Cromwell exchanged countries, the one might have been a sergeant and the other an exciseman." Owen did but suggest the undeniable conclusion that in such case Cromwell would have been a Pagan and Cæsar a Puritan ; and therefore co-operators should meet in stores or communities men of every sect, without hostility or dislike—since particular faiths are to be honoured as far as they make men into brethren, and are to be accepted by all who deem them true ; while their special varieties are to be equally regarded as arising in geographical or chronological accidents, and not to be ascribed to sin. Co-operation would be impossible if its disciples stooped to sectarian antipathies and spoke of each other with the bitterness with which Sir John Bowring found the Chief Priest of the Samaritans of Sychar speaks of the Jews. It was the knowledge given to co-operators of the human burden of inherited incapacity that imparted to them that great strength of patience and charity of judgment which enabled their societies to endure, while the retaliating and fiercer political and religious parties around them fought themselves out. Those who look may see that the same nature is master of us all ; that individual man and diversified races, every sect and every opinion, every passion and every act, are the product of a tireless destiny, which went before, and of circumstances which follow after, besetting us at every step—now inspiring the lofty, anon inflaming the base, making men objects of gladness or pity ; saving the high, who know it, from pride ; protecting the low from scorn and despair ; striking or serving

us, just as we are wise, to study the ways and observe the methods of Nature. Those who learn this know no more haste or apathy, foolish hatred or foolish despair.

Co-operators will never remain leal and true to their society unless a foundation which never gives way is laid in the understanding. You cannot command unity, no exhortation will produce it. By mere business sense a member will put up with some failure or loss, or with inferior commodities at times, for the advantage which can be had in the main by holding together. By mere business sense he will not expect too much; he will know that success comes little by little, and generally arrives late and takes disagreeable caprices on the way. By mere business sense a man may be found in his place on dividend day. But more than this will be wanted to make him a pleasant, ardent, and continuous associate. If he is made aware that wrong-headed people mostly had that twist before they were born—that the querulous man has vinegar nerves, which he would be glad to exchange for the olive-oil sort—that a conceited associate has gas on the brain which inflates all his faculties and makes him think they are solid because they feel big—he will be tolerant and steadfast when others turn aside offended. Half the irritation we feel at the errors and angular ways of others arises from forgetting that we ourselves are not infallible, and have stupid and ungracious intervals like others.

6. A fool cannot be a co-operator, and since those who know everything do not remember it always, every one should be instructed and kept instructed in what he is expected to act upon. Co-operators have made money by their method of business, they have won honours by being the first of the working class who cared for self-education as a higher form of property. Aristipus having counselled a father to seek a good tutor for his son, was asked what would that amount to? He answered, "A hundred crowns." The father, thinking the sum large, replied that "such a sum might buy him a slave." "Well," said Aristipus, "bestow your money so and you shall have two slaves, the one your ill-bred son and the other he whom you buy for your money."<sup>1</sup>

The Church for a long time disliked education as tending to make the lower orders unmanageable, and the Dissenters

<sup>1</sup> "Thoughts on Education," by Bishop Burnet.

feared it as making them carnal-minded—not seeing that the intellectual must always be more spiritual than the ignorant : but the Co-operators had no dislike of it, no misgiving about it. It was to them a means of self-defence. In 1835 Mr. Owen announced that he had received £500 for the purpose of “commencing a school on the most scientific principles for the children of co-operators and £2,000 more were to be had to extend a knowledge of sciences among the people.” The co-operators made schools for mechanics popular. Sixty years ago co-operators were in advance of the nation now, in proposing the best instruction for the humblest.

Knowledge is the same thing to the understanding as the eye is to the body. Knowledge is the sight of the mind. All knowledge which throws light on what a man has to do is of the nature of outside help to him. A mind of few ideas is as a short lever : it can move only little things ; while a mind of many ideas has a longer leverage, and can move larger obstacles out of its way. Thus knowledge of the right kind is plainly a good investment.

Every human society in which life and property were in daily peril has found law and order worth paying for. Those who believe that things will last their time still have misgivings for their children.

It was one of Mr. Owen’s practical merits that he foresaw that considerations for the security of society in the future, paid in the present. He had not, like Fairfax, the opportunity of being a king, but he might have been known as the richest of manufacturers had he not preferred something higher.

Co-operators knew that it was the want of intelligence that kept up ugliness in life. Beauty in art, order in cities, grace of action, good manners, all pay ; only few persons know them as things of value. One reason is that the majority of persons never have the means of buying perfect things. They are obliged to do without them, and naturally do not regard them as otherwise they would. Persons who have anything to spend and only spend it in buying mere sensual pleasure, have the minds of animals, not the minds of men. Scientific knowledge and literary knowledge is now provided more or less. Board Schools, Art Schools, Science Classes, Technical and other colleges are now open to working men.



But education in probity, in self-possession, in courtesy, in pride of workmanship, in public spirit, in public duty, in citizenship, where are they taught? Co-operators can only acquire such knowledge by keeping Libraries, News Rooms, Lecture Halls at their own command, and for their own use. A recent writer has shown that in Civil Service Examinations none are examined in manliness, good sense, or the elements of personal character.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Brudenell Carter has proved that there is no over-work within the limits of daily strength. Within those limits work is a condition of health. The idle die of idleness. Many more than are imagined die of acquired stupidity. Of course there are a good many people who do not need to acquire stupidity, they always have a stock on hand. He is base who, having principles he knows to be useful to others, does not endeavour to diffuse them; and since Co-operation becomes more profitable as more persons engage in it, it is want of sense not to extend it.

Co-operation is liable, in one place or other, to be overrun by those who see with selfish eyes an escape from misery with money in it, and see nothing else in it. Co-operation, like the corn-laden caravans of merchants in the desert, is seized upon by marauding bands, who carry off treasures intended for honest sale. No sooner is it discerned that Co-operation creates wealth than swarms of mercenaries swoop down upon it, to avail themselves of it as a means of gain, caring nothing for the social education and equality it was intended to promote.

If no educational fund was devised in the infancy of a society, often no will is strong enough, no reason can prevail, to retrace the deplorable step. Ignorance grows upon a society as age upon an individual. It stiffens its limbs, it bows its head, it dims its sight, it enfeebles its mind, until it retains nothing but the courage of cupidity; and to gratify that it walks in ignoble ruts all its days. Such a society may grow, but it has no soundness; its largeness is puffiness, and a shock of adversity may bring it at once under the hands of the fiscal coroner who sits in the Bankruptcy Court. As it commanded no respect in its day, no one mourned its demise. Since you cannot make co-operators out of simpletons, it is

<sup>1</sup> "Essay on Commissions," by John S. Storr.



prudent to take care that they do not overrun the society. Cæsar, we are told, lamented that he could proceed no faster on his victorious march than the asses who carried his baggage could travel. The progress of most societies is often retarded by the same kind of animals. The best directors are always hampered by want of more intelligence among the members. The ignorant do not understand their own interest, nor how to support those who do. Stores whose members are unvaccinated with business intelligence are sure to break out with the smallpox of ignorance sooner or later; some have it in a very bad form, and some die of it. Lectures and literature must be supplied for information. The brain, like the body, is starved if not fed with ideas. The thought is thin, the language is lean, the logic is limp, the illustrations rheumatic, and can hardly stand upright.

The co-operator cannot, like the theologian, increase the income of the working class by prayer. He works by human arrangements, economy, and sagacity, and it is only those who have confidence in these means that have enthusiasm in extending Co-operation. It was the first murderer, Cain, who asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The co-operator cannot keep his brother, but he has a strong interest in enabling his brother to keep himself, and he knows the way, and knowing it, if he does not exert himself to make it known to others, who may be lost through not seeing it, he is a murderer by his neglect.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

## INDUSTRIAL PARTNERSHIP

"It is a natural and not an unreasonable wish for every man to form that he should have some interest in, and some control over, the work on which he is employed. It is human nature, I think, that a man should like to feel that he is to be a gainer by any extra industry that he may put forth, and that he should like to have some sense of proprietorship in the shop, or mill, or whatever it may be, in which he passes his days. And it is because the system introduced of late years of co-operative industry meets that natural wish that I look forward to its extension with so much hopefulness. I believe it is the best, the surest remedy for that antagonism of labour and capital."—EARL DERBY (then Lord Stanley) at Opening of the Liverpool Trades Hall, October, 1869.

ONE form of Industrial Partnership is a business in which the employers pay to the hands a portion of profits made in addition to their wages, on the supposition that the men will create the said profit by increased interest and assiduity in their work.

M. Le Comte de Paris, the author of a wise and readable book on Trades Unions, describes "Co-operative Societies for production as transforming the workman into a capitalist by securing to him a *share* of the profits of the undertaking in which he has invested the capital of his labour." A co-operative workshop does more, it divides not a share, but *all* the profits among the producers.<sup>1</sup>

Earl Derby was distinguished among public men by the faculty of seeing a question from which he may dissent from the point of view of those who accept it; and such is his clearness of statement that those who listen to him find their own case put as it were by themselves, when they see it most completely and state it best to their own satisfaction. The question of industrial partnerships is contained in the fol-

<sup>1</sup> "Trades Unions of England," p. 214. Edited by Thomas Hughes, Q.C.

lowing passage from the speech mentioned at the head of this chapter :—

“In participation there are losses as well as gains ; but the very fact that these occur will make the men who share in them understand and feel better than they ever did before the responsibilities and the difficulties of the employer ; and if, as is quite possible, many having felt its difficulties, prefer the certainty and security of fixed wages, they, at least, have had their choice between the two systems. It is quite probable that there are some trades, some kinds of businesses in which it cannot be brought about ; but it seems to me that it is in that direction that the efforts of the best workers and the ideas of the best thinkers are tending, and we are not to be disheartened by a few failures, or disappointed because we do not at once hit on the best way of doing what has never been done before.”

Partnership in industry seems to have entered the Irish mind before it did the English, if regard be had to legislative evidence. In Dublin as early as 1788 there was “issued by George Grierson, printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty” (there has been a good deal of Majesty since 1788 which has not appeared “Most Excellent” to anybody), “an Act to promote Trade and Manufacture by regulating and encouraging partnerships.” The words “Chap. XLVI.” were annexed thereto. Its preamble set forth that “whereas the increasing the stock of money employed in Trade and Manufacture must greatly promote the commerce and prosperity of this kingdom, and many persons might be induced to subscribe sums of money to men well qualified for trade (but not of competent fortune to carry it on largely) if they (the subscribers) were allowed to abide by the profit or loss of the trade for the same, and were not to be deemed Traders on that account or subject thereby to any further or other demands than the sums so subscribed.” This is excellently put. The whole theory of joint-stock partnerships is here. Mr. Schofield, M.P. for Birmingham, when he carried his Bill in the English House of Commons eighty years later, could not have constructed a more relevant preamble. Though valuable in its way, joint-stock partnership is not Co-operation.

It was Mr. Owen, at Lanark, who first showed masters what they might, with honour and profit, do by voluntary partnership with those they employed. The law did not permit participation of profit with workmen in those days. It could only be done in the form of gifts. Only patronage Co-operation was possible. Mr. Owen made these in the form of education, recreation, improved dwellings, and increased wages. All these were revocable—the law forbade contracts of participation with workmen. Industrial equity bore the name of benevolence, and dividends of profit reached workmen in the form of a discriminating charity.

Mr. Owen was a Paternalist. He believed in the general goodness of humanity, and that goodness could guide it; but he had no conviction that it could guide itself.

Industrial Partnerships owe to Fourier the principle of making labour attractive instead of repulsive, and of distributing the profits in proportion to the capital, skill, and labour, contributed by each; Fourier made definite the idea of labour becoming the partner of capital, instead of merely its servant.

It is, however, to the practical genius of an Englishman, Mr. Charles Babbage, that we owe the earliest proposal, made by a writer of repute in England, in favour of workmen being associated as participators in the profits of a manufactory. On the south coast of England it was known that one-half of all the fish caught belonged to the owner of the boat and the net, the other half being divided in equal portions among the fishermen using the net and boat, they being bound to make repairs when needed. Cornish miners were paid in proportion to the richness and produce of the vein worked. Thus they naturally became quick-sighted in the discovery of lodes and in estimating their value, and it was their interest to avail themselves of every improvement in bringing the ore cheaply to the surface; Mr. Babbage therefore argued that if some joint participation of profit in manufactures was devised, the result of such arrangement would be :—

1. That every person engaged in it would have a *direct* interest in its prosperity; since the effect of any success would almost immediately produce a corresponding change in his own receipts.

2. Every person in the factory would have an immediate interest in preventing any waste or mismanagement in all the departments.

3. The talent of all connected with it would be strongly directed to its improvement.

4. When any additional hands were required, it would be the common interest of all to admit only the most skilful ; and it would be far less easy to impose upon a dozen workmen than upon the single proprietor of a factory.

5. And by no means least, there would be removed, by common consent, the causes which compel men to combine for their own separate interests.

It is said an Englishman never knows when he is beaten, but a workman of any sense does know when he has won, or when fairness of an employer has conceded to him the opportunity of benefit in the trade in which he is engaged. So that there would exist a union between employer and workman to overcome common difficulties and promote a common interest. Lieutenant Babbage, in a letter which I had the pleasure to receive from him, says that his father advised co-operative manufactories, as the chapter in his work shows, entitled "A New Manufacturing System."

Mr. Babbage's wise scheme met with very scant co-operative recognition. The Editor of the *New Moral World* saw no good that was likely to come of industrial partnerships. The scheme which has attained ascendancy and rendered great service to the working class, was dismissed with these discouraging editorial words, "As a temporary expedient we are very doubtful of the value of Mr. Babbage's plan, while as an adequate amelioration of the condition of the industrious classes, we can have no faith in schemes that render them dependent for subsistence on the chances of employment."<sup>1</sup>

The Chartists among the working class thought Free Trade a Whig scheme to deceive them ; Trade Unionists suspected it as a contrivance to get more work out of them. No attention was paid by any manufacturer to this sensible and well-put plan. Mr. Babbage might as well have spoken down a well, as far any response was concerned. Nobody then had any real confidence in mutual relations between

<sup>1</sup> *New Moral World*, p. 197, vol. iii.



capital and labour. But it remains an encouraging fact that a great mathematician should give the actual details of the industrial policy of the future as exact as the calculation of the appearance of a new planet.

In some cases employers pay large wages from pure good-will to their men, or provide news-rooms, or dining-rooms, or schools, or provide them with good habitations at low rents, or pension old workmen, or contribute to provident or other societies for their personal advantage. Such employers do virtually establish an industrial partnership, of good-will though not of right.

Lord Brassey evidently takes more than his father's interest in the commercial welfare and industrial security of the working class. He pointed out in his Halifax address how it comes to pass that "the rich, gathering themselves together in the most eligible situation in every town, the price of land becomes so enormous that it is impossible to erect houses at rates which, while not exceeding what workmen can afford to pay, will be remunerative to the owners and builders. Hence the working class are compelled to occupy more remote suburbs. They live in daily contact with no other class but their own, and a consequent danger is incurred of social disunion. This state of things is practically inevitable under our existing system." Then the existing system requires altering. In the town of Leicester the wealthier portion of the population have taken possession of all the higher and salubrious parts, and the poor have no choice but to live in the lower and unhealthier. Mr. Stansfeld, M.P., had in view to introduce a Bill to enable corporations to acquire land, in the vicinity of large towns, so as to secure the poorer population some opportunity of healthy existence. Undoubtedly "the tendency of modern industry," as Lord Brassey remarks, "has been, and will continue to be, towards the concentration of capital in large corporate or private establishments." There must be contrived some participation of these inexorable and unhinderable profits among the artisan class; else the many will have no choice but to combine against the few, and stop in some disagreeable way that which stops them from existing durably.<sup>1</sup> Common

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Mill's proposal to tax unearned increments would diminish the evil.

people increasing in intelligence cannot be expected to perish in the sight of ever-increasing affluence, and die gratis.

The saying that "it is liberty which is old, and despotism which is new," oft recurs to a writer on industrial welfare. It seems a new thing to propose now that employers should be studious to provide for the welfare of those who labour. In Egypt the pyramids endure; the huts of the Fellahs, of the makers of bricks, have been destroyed and renewed a thousand times since Pentaour watched their misery. But other ancient nations showed noble regard for workmen. At Moke the great pyramid of the Chimus remains built by the ancient Peruvians. The mighty Peruvian pyramid still stands imposing in its decay, and by it equally remain, no less permanent, the dwellings of the masons and metal workers, "organised," says a recent explorer, "with an order and a system which a Socialist phalanstery might despair of rivalling."<sup>1</sup> In all the dominions which the Incas ruled as monarchs or suzerains, this combination of love of display and care for the well-being of the humblest subjects, speaks of a wise consideration for the people.

A "sentimental" man is one who does what is right because it ought to be done. A "practical" man is one who does what is right because it pays. The practical man I respect because he raises Co-operation into the region in which it can live. The sentimental man I honour because he raises Co-operation above the region of dividends into the nobler region where the indispensable pursuit of gain is purified by the loftier feeling of duty. There are those who think a man "practical" who gets dividends anyhow. He who willingly does wrong because it pays, is a fool or a rascal. He may profit by it, but he fills his little money-bag with a scoundrel shovel; and the executive business of perdition will be very badly managed if there be not somebody's janissary on the other side the grave waiting for these knaves. Sentiment is as yet unmacadamised ground, and some stumble thereon. There is all the difference between light and twilight—of pursuing equity from a sense of justice and pursuing it for mere gain.

<sup>1</sup> Incidents of Travel and Exploration in the Land of the Incas (George Squires, M.A.) See art. in *Saturday Review*.

Political economists, with a perspicacity unexercised until lately, now discern that "all extra remuneration that is awarded to labour in excess of the wages that are earned by labour is, in reality, given, not for the pure or simple labour itself, but for the greater skill, ability, knowledge, or intelligence with which it is accompanied; and these additional qualifications which accompany labour are regarded by Adam Smith as a species of capital that is fixed and realised in the persons of those who possessed them, and the value of which is to be estimated by their worth in simple labour."<sup>1</sup>

"Some years ago," says Dr. Doherty, "it was reported in the public press that a great saving of coke had been effected by the managers of the Belgian railways; the work formerly done by ninety-five tons now being accomplished with forty-eight tons. And this is the way in which the saving was made. It was known that the men who used the coke to heat the locomotives on the line were not careful of the fuel. Ninety-five kilogrammes of coke were consumed for every league of distance run, but this was known to be more than necessary; but how to remedy the evil was the problem. A bonus of 3½d. on every hectolitre of coke saved on this average of ninety-five to the league was offered to the men concerned, and this trifling bonus worked the miracle. The work was done equally well, or better, with forty-eight kilogrammes of coke, instead of ninety-five; nearly one-half, saved by careful work, at an expense of probably less than one-tenth of the saving."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Thomas Hughes, writing to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in reply to an article which suggested that if no profits were made at Methly there would be no means of paying the labourers, who while they would share the profits would not stand to any of the losses, remarks that "In the first year of the partnership a very considerable surplus profit may be made. By the articles, the board of directors—consisting of the former employers and several of their foremen—have the power of setting apart and investing a large proportion of these profits as a reserve fund, which may be used at any time in

<sup>1</sup> "Certain Practical Questions of Political Economy," by a former member of the Political Economy Club (Simpkin & Co., 1873).

<sup>2</sup> "Philosophy of History," Dr. Doherty, Fourierist.

aid of wages or in making up the fixed interest on invested capital in future years. If this power is exercised, and the first year or so is profitable I think the danger is overcome. I believe that as a rule the periods are not long during which a properly managed business does not return enough to pay the average rate of wages, and the interest on capital usual in the trade, be it 7 or 10 or 15 per cent. The reserve fund once established may fairly be looked to, to enable the partnership to tide over these slack times without a reduction of the wages of labour or the fixed interest on capital."

Lord George Manners, who projected an industrial partnership on his farm, answered a similar objection. He said, "True, I may have to pay wages some years when there has been a loss, but I do not forget that the best work the labourers could do may have decreased that loss, and in other years have increased my profits materially." This implied a generous feeling and perfect perception of the question.

In Leicester, at a "Treat" given by Messrs. W. Corah & Sons, hosiery manufacturers, to 450 of their workpeople, one of the firm said: "Masters are making profits, and it was nothing but right that those who worked for them should enjoy as far as possible their share of the profits (cheers). He took it that there were respective duties for employers." In the same town there are other employers who equally exemplify the sense of industrial equity. In the North capital as a rule bites. In Midland England it is friendly in tone to the workman. In Leicester Michael Wright & Sons made a deliberate effort to introduce the principles of industrial partnership into their Elastic Web Works, but did not find their efforts supported by their workpeople. In the same town Messrs. Gimson & Co. introduced it into their large engine works. They adopted the wise plan of first entrusting its operation to a selection of their leading workmen, to whom they offered the advantage of a share of the profits after the attainment of a fair dividend upon capital. To these selected workmen was left the power of nominating other workmen whom they discerned to be capable and willing to increase the prosperity of the company by zeal and judgment in the discharge of their duties.



This plan had the advantage of limiting the division of profits to those who showed increased efforts in augmenting them, and left the responsibility of excluding the indifferent to their fellow-workmen. Thus the opportunity was fairly given, and it depended upon the men to make the arrangement permanent by making it profitable.<sup>1</sup>

Before an employer takes this step he values his entire plant, and prescribes the interest it ought to yield him on the average. It is the surplus that may arise above this that he proposes to share with his men. Whether he will do this is a matter of calculation and good sense. He knows that if a workman has no interest in the business beyond his stipulated wages, he requires to be timed and watched ; he adopts the easiest processes ; he cares nothing to economise material ; he has small pride in his work, and little concern for the reputation or fortune of the firm in whose employ he is. He changes his situation whenever he can better himself, leaving his master to supply his place as he may by a strange hand, who loses time in familiarising himself with the arrangements of a workshop new to him, or blunders, or destroys property for the want of special local experience. If the workman has no chance of changing his place for a better, he engages in strikes, imperils the capital and endangers the business of his master. If his strike succeeds, his master dislikes him because of the loss and humiliation he has suffered. If his strike fails, the workman is poorer in means and sourer in spirit. He works only from necessity ; he hates his employer with all his heart ; he does him all the mischief and makes all the waste he safely can. He gives his ear to alien counsellors, and conspires and waits for the day when he can strike again with more success. If an employer has a taste for this disreputable conflict he can have it. If he does not like it he can prevent it. The newly-made middle-class gentleman is prone to say, "What is my neighbour to me ?" It is enough for him that his

<sup>1</sup> In promoting industrial partnership plans, women often show quicker wit than their husbands. I heard one say at a partnership dinner of Messrs. Gimson's men at Leicester, that he had no faith in getting anything that way. His wife said, "Well, don't be a fool. You join and give me your share of profits to buy a new gown with." He made the promise, and found she had enough the first year to buy her three gowns, and then he added, laughingly, he "was sorry he had made the promise."



neighbour does not annoy him or does not want to borrow anything from him, nor create any nuisance upon adjacent premises which may reach to him. Beyond this he thinks very little about his neighbour, and will live beside him for years and never know him, nor want to know him. A co-operative thinker sees in his neighbour a person whom it pays to know. He has a social idea in his mind, which is not merely kindness, it is worth money.

Charles Frederick Abel became chamber musician to the Queen of George III., because none but he could play upon the viola de gamba (a small violoncello with six strings) with equal perfection. Afterwards came Paganini, who entranced nations by the melody concealed in a solitary cord. It was genius in him to discover and display it. We have not yet explored all the mysteries of cat-gut; yet capitalists would assure us that they have sounded all the compass of the most wonderful of all instruments—man; whereas the employer of labour chiefly knows man as an available animal who trots under the whip, or as a hired machine of reluctant action. The workman has skill and good-will, contriving, saving, and perfecting qualities, which are never enlisted where one man is a mere instrument bound to fidelity only by the tenure of starvation—designing to desert his employer, and the employer intending to dismiss him the moment either can do without the other. Industrial partnership is a policy of buying the skill and will of a man—his genius and his self-respect, which elevate industry into a pursuit of art, and service into companionship. It is a scheme of reciprocity. An industrial partnership is but a superior business arrangement.

But co-operators can make better partnerships for themselves by establishing workshops of their own. To supplicate for them would simply give employers the idea that some charity was sought at their hands. They can be obtained by combination. Trade unions are the available means for this purpose. At the Social Science Congress held in Leeds in 1871 I said in the Economy Section, over which Mr. Newmarch presided, that the working classes should be in that position in which they should neither supplicate nor depend upon the will of their masters. What they had no

right to, no entreaty should obtain for them. What they had a right to, they should be in a position to command. The conception of working a mine the French express by the word *exploiter*. By the phrase *l'exploitation de l'homme par l'homme* is meant that a capitalist uses a man and works a man as he works a mine; he gets all he can out of him. There is no great objection to this so long as the man likes it. Where, however, these partnerships are volunteered, that is a different thing, and too much regard or honour cannot be paid to those whence the offer comes. A speech quite as important as that of Lord Derby's, considering the rank of the gentleman who made it, is of this nature, I mean the speech which the Right Hon. Mr. Brand, Speaker of the House of Commons, addressed to his labourers at Glynde. He said, "We shall never come to a satisfactory settlement of the relations between employer and employed until the employed, according to the amount of labour and capital he has invested in the concern, is interested in the good conduct of that concern."

One merit of this speech was that it was followed by a plan for practically enabling his labourers to become shareholders in the estate at Glynde. The language and the example are alike important. To admit labourers as part-proprietors of the Glynde estate, confers upon them a position of pride and self-respect as valuable as it is new. Such admission, rightly used, would produce more advantages than many agitations, such as are within the means of labourers to conduct. To have it admitted by a gentleman so eminent and influential as the representative of the House of Commons, that labourers had a social right to share in the profits of the estate which they contributed to cultivate, was an admission of more service to the working people than many Acts of Parliament passed in their name, and professedly for their benefit. For an humble villager to be able to say that he was a shareholder in the Glynde estate, however small might be the portion which his prudence and frugality enabled him to acquire, however small might be the profits thus accruing to him, his position was entirely changed. His forefathers were slaves, then serfs, then hired labourers. He becomes in some sort a landowner. He henceforth

stands upon what Lord Cockburn would call a "colourable" equality with the proprietor himself. If he had any cultivated spirit of independence in him, such labourer would have more satisfaction in the idea, than many a tenant farmer is able to find in the position which he holds. It must follow in a few years that the wages of such a man must increase, and by prudence, temper, and good judgment the relation between this body of small proprietors and the chief owner must be pleasant and honourable. That these labourers were wanting in the disposition, or were ill advised by those to whom they would naturally look for counsel, and neglected to act on the unusual offer made by Mr. Brand, detracts in no way from the value of it. Men may be taken to the steps of Paradise, and decline to ascend, yet he is not the less meritorious who gives them the opportunity. A man may not have the sense to ascend—he may not understand his opportunity—he may even distrust it, or think it too insignificant to trouble about, he may have the humility which makes him doubt his own fitness to advance, he may have the diffidence which makes him distrust his own power of going forward, he may even prefer to remain where he is, content that he may advance on another occasion; but he is no longer the same man, he stands higher in his own esteem if he has any self-respect. He has had the chance of better things, and the old feeling of discontent and sense of exclusion and bitterness at his precarious state are changed, and an inspiration of manliness, equality, and undefined satisfaction takes the place of his former feelings. A man may have a great opportunity, and for some preference or infatuation of his own he may go past it; he may regret it, but he is happier than he who never had the chance of bettering himself. So every manufacturer and every land-owner who makes overtures of industrial partnership to his men, raises the character of mastership and proprietorship; sooner or later men will accept the offers, and be grateful for them, and turn them to fortunate account. In the meantime, the whole temper of industry is being changed by these overtures; the mighty doors of conciliation and equality are being opened, through which, one day, all the workmen of England will pass.

In the meantime the mere dream of this invests the order of industry with new interest and hope. This will seem sentimental only to those who know human nature second hand. We all live in ideals. Those who deny the ideal of others live in one of their own—lower or higher. The true artist, solitary and needy though he may be, paints for the truth, the thinker thinks for it, the martyr dies for it, the glory of which only his eye sees. Progress is the mark of humanity. The aspiration even of the lowest is the ideal which carries him forward; and when it fails, manhood perishes.

Co-operation has filled the air with ideas of progress by concert. Men thought the flashes of lightning which play upon the fringe of a coming tempest, were the rainbow arch which denotes a permanent truce between the warring elements, a sign that the storm is passing away.

## CHAPTER XXIX

## INDUSTRIAL CONSPIRACIES

"My opinion is, we shall never have a satisfactory settlement of the wages question until the labourer receives in some shape or other a share of the profit of the business in which he is engaged. I refer not only to those employed upon farms, but to those engaged in mining, in manufactures, and in trades of all kinds."—*The Right Hon. Mr. Brand's (Speaker of the House of Commons) Speech to Labourers at Glynde, 1876.*

HAD declarations of opinion like that of Lord Hampden, above cited, been acted upon by employers, industrial conspiracies, the "conflicts of capital and labour," would not have existed.

A conspiracy is a secret scheme for attaining certain advantages by coercion. Modern trades unions have been mostly of this kind, the object being, in their case, increase of wages. Co-operation is not a conspiracy, it is a concerted industrial arrangement, open and legitimate, with a view to place moderate competence within the reach of workmen and—keep it there. The end sought by unionists and co-operators is practically the same; the means of its attainment being different is no intrinsic ground of antagonism between them. Because two companies of excursionists to the same place choose to go, one on foot and the other by railway, is no reason for their hating each other on the road, and not associating at the end of their journey. Nor if any of the walking party become foot-sore, is there any reason why they should not be invited to come into the train at the first station.

The co-operators imagine themselves to have adopted the easier, cheaper, and speedier way of reaching the pleasant territory of competence. They lose no money on the road, they even make what money they expend productive. They



do not annoy masters, nor petition them for increase of wages, nor wait upon them, nor send deputations to them, nor negotiate with them—they make themselves masters. They supply or hire their own capital, they fix their own wages, and, as has been said, divide the whole of the available profits among themselves. Thus they attain increase of income without strikes, or incurring absolute loss of money by paying men to be idle. I am not among those who consider money wasted on strikes. It is an investment in resistance to inequitable payment, which brings return in increased manliness if not in increased wages. At the same time it must be owned there is loss of capital in it. The masters' profits and men's savings spent in strikes, disappear as though they were thrown into the sea. A strike is war, and all war is loss of the material means of the combatants. Therefore the co-operator, whose mind turns mainly upon the hinge of economy, holds that employers, when unfair or aggressive, are to be superseded, not combated. The superseding process has more dignity and costs less. If a gentleman has cause of complaint against a neighbour, an associate, or a stranger, he explains the matter to him, asks for what in reason he has a right to ask, taking care himself neither to be impatient nor give just cause of offence in his manner of putting his case, and if he fail to obtain redress he avoids the person and takes what steps he can to render it impossible that he shall be treated in a similar manner again. This is the co-operative plan of dealing with too exacting middlemen or inconsiderate employers. Nobody quarrels but the bully who has an object in it, or the incapable, who do not know how to put themselves right, except by the primitive expedients of the savage or the washerwoman, by the use of the tomahawk or the tongs.

Just as there would be a good deal of reverence in the world were it not for theologians, so there would be more peace and better understanding between adversaries were it not for conciliators. Conciliators are often disagreeable persons who, having no sympathy for either side, see "faults on both," or, having a predilection for one party, lectures the other upon the good sense of giving way to it. Conciliation is like charity, it is irrelevant where justice is needed—it is offensive where justice is refused.

A combination of workmen to increase their wages is called "a conspiracy," while a similar combination of employers passes under the pleasant description of "a meeting of masters to promote the interests of trade."

Trades unions of the guilds came first. Modern unions grew by a sort of political instinct. It came to be seen that it was not by revolution that the poor could fight their forlorn and frantic way to competence, nor could they in isolation alter the constitution of society. In some faint and perplexing way it was discovered to them that by combination they might acquire redress. Many could resist where the few were crushed; and combination did not require money—only sense. The poorest could unite. It cost nothing to cohere, and cohering was strength, strength was resistance, resistance was money, for thus higher wages came. True, the gain to one set of workmen often proves a serious cost to others, as when masons compel higher wages they put up the house rents of all the poor in the town, and make it more difficult for an artisan to build a house. Yet it was an advantage to the feeble to learn that combination was power, its right use is the second step.

So little attention has been given by historians to projects of the people for protecting their industrial interests, that it is difficult to tell how early trades unions, such as we now know them, began in England. Ebenezer Elliott told me he believed that the ancient industrial guilds arose in efforts of workpeople to forefend themselves and dignify labour, by creating for it rights which might enable it to raise its head under the contempt of gentlemen and insolence of the military spirit. Dr. John Alfred Langford—who has himself helped to raise the character of the industrial class by the persistence with which he, a member of it, has acquired knowledge, and the ability with which he has used it—relates in his "A Century of Birmingham Life" curious particulars of an early conspiracy of needlemen in that active town. The needlemen of Birmingham always knew how to sew ideas together as well as fabrics. If their strike of more than 128 years ago was the first one, strikes came to perfection early. Unionists turn to Co-operation in self-defence, showing a mastery of resources not common to this time. In Dr. Langford's pages we learn

that in *Swinney's Chronicle* of February 13, 1777, the master tailors of Birmingham advertised for 100 hands, who were sure to be able to earn 16s. a week. They were to apply to William Moyston, 130, Moor Street, in that town. As the war with America was then about over, many thought that a nude tribe of Red Indians had arrived in Birmingham and needed clothing at a short notice. Four days later the mystery was explained by a notice to "Journeyman Taylors" signed by George Hanley, telling the public "The statement of the masters was false," and that "the prices were stipulated so that he must be an extraordinary hand to get 12s.," and for that reason they were "all out of work." The masters rejoined by asking for "40 or 50 journeymen taylors to work piece-work, holding out prospects of 16s. to 18s. per week." The applicants "were not to be subject to the House of Call, as none would be employed but such as called at the masters' houses and are free from all combinations." It appears, therefore, that "combinations" must have been common then, and the masters' restrictions were precisely what we hear of to-day. The journeymen in their turn appealed to the public, whose sympathy was with the men. They said they "objected to piece-work on the ground of their late suffering by it." They defended their "House of Call as an ancient custom both in London and all other capital towns," and announced "that they had joined together in order to carry on their trade in all its different branches, and that good workmen and those only who applied at their House of Call at the "Coach and Horses," in Bell Street, would meet with good encouragement." By "hunting the country round" all the masters obtained were "inexperienced lads," whereas the tailors on strike were able to serve gentlemen well. Thus in Birmingham near 130 years ago a co-operative workshop was devised as the sequel of a strike. It is the first instance known. Trades unions in England as this century has known them, were not the device of policy but the offsprings of instinct and courage. There were splendid trades unions in the days of the English guilds. Nor would they have arisen again save that men were inspired with boldness by political teachers, and began to combine to offer some resistance. They little thought of demanding higher wages—they thought it a great

triumph to prevent theirs being lowered. The fable of the bundle of sticks struck them as it did the poor co-operators as a very original story. As one set of workmen after another faggoted themselves together, the humble and familiar symbol of the tied sticks appeared in their trade journals, and was soon carried on their banners. Then combination laws were passed against the struggling unionists. Those who did not get imprisoned or transported like the Dorchester labourers, were told that what they sought was all of no use: supply and demand had been discovered, and in case these failed, the labourer could not be sufficiently grateful that a poor-house had been provided for him, as the workhouse master told the dying pauper who presumed to want to see the clergyman—that “he ought to be glad he had a hell to go to.”<sup>1</sup> Still the workman clung to his union, feeling, but not knowing how to explain it, as Mr. Roebuck subsequently did. This is the unionist case as put by that master of statement:—

“The working man, single-handed, as compared with the master, is a weak and impotent being. The master has him in his own hands, can do with him what he likes, give him what wages he pleases; for there are a large number of persons outside wishing to be employed—labour is cheap and plentiful; and the master decides that he will give the men low wages. There are 200 or 2,000 men working together, and they say one to another, ‘Let us act as one man.’ They bring the whole body of workmen to bear as one man on the master. Let there be equality on both sides, the working man having the benefit of the only capital he possesses, viz., his labour; and the master having the benefit of that which is absolutely necessary to production—his capital.”

Now everybody admits the right of the workman to combine; but those who admit the right deny its utility, and contend that the workmen had better leave things to take their course, and wages would rise of themselves. Since, however, employers and merchants who say this are observed never to wait for prices to rise of themselves but combine to help them upwards, the workman came to the conclusion that he had

<sup>1</sup> A story related by Mr. Frederic Harrison.



better combine to quicken wages in their laggard movement towards elevation.

Any one can see that combination is a distant power, only reached by many steps; confidence, organisation, and discipline are some of them. The working people have conspired in many ways, according to their knowledge. The reason why political philanthropists have always made it their chief object to promote the education of the poorest class in the State, was their perceiving that workmen would one day expect the exhortations to frugality and prudence, given them by their "betters," to be followed by their "betters," and insist upon it being followed. When Mr. Malthus and the Political Economists began their protests against the large families of the poor, wise and friendly protests as they were, the day was sure to come when the poor in turn would protest against the large families of the rich, whom the indigent would know had to be provided for at their expense. If the labourer is to be frugal, and live upon his small income without debt, or need of charity in sickness, he will be sure to wonder, one day, why those who admonish him should need mansions, parks, carriages, and footmen. Unless the poor are kept absolutely ignorant and stupid, no man can advise frugality to poverty without those who receive the advice expecting that he who gives it will follow it himself. All monitorial improvement of the lower class must end in enforcing a corresponding improvement in the upper classes. These ebullitions of sense on the part of the working classes are very infrequent in their history. I have met with only two or three instances, long forgotten now and buried in the obscure pamphlets of 1832. Their relevance, however, is not gone, and the vigour of the argument, forcible beyond the defamatory invective on which feeble agitators so commonly rely. When Mr. Joseph Pease, of the firm of Pease & Co., worsted manufacturers at Darlington, one of the Society of Friends, and a strenuous member of the Anti-Slavery Society, was a candidate for the southern division of the county of Durham, he issued an address to the electors, in which he said, "In all measures for the amelioration of our kind in striking off the chains of slavery and mental darkness, in restraining the oppressor, and in turning the attention of a Christian Legislature to Christian



principles, I would be ardent and exertive." Whereupon a little piecer in his factory was sent to him, with this little infantile speech in her hand :—

" Good master, let a little child, a piecer in your factory  
 From early dawn to dewy eve—relate her simple history.  
 Before I came to work for you, my heart was full of mirth and glee ;  
 I play'd and laugh'd, and ran about, no kitten was so blythe as me.  
 But just when I was eight years old, poor mother, press'd with want  
 and woe,  
 Took me one morning by the hand, and said, 'To factory thou  
*must go.*'  
 They thrust me in and shut the door, 'midst rattling wheels and  
 noisy din,  
 And in the frame gait made me stand, to learn the art of piecen-ing.  
 I often hurt my little hands, and made my tender fingers bleed,  
 When piecing threads and stopping flies, and thought 'twas very  
 hard indeed.  
 The overlooker pass'd me oft, and when he cried, 'An end down  
 there,'  
 My little heart did tremble so, I almost tumbled down with fear.  
 When at the weary evening's close I could not keep myself awake,  
 He sometimes *strapp'd* me till I cry'd as if my little heart would  
 break.  
 Oh, master ! did you know the half that we endure, *to gain you*  
*gold*  
 Your heart might tremble for the day *when that sad tale must all*  
*be told.*  
 Ah ! then I thought of days gone by, when, far from spindles, din,  
 and heat,  
 I deck'd my little giddy brow with buttercups and violets sweet.  
 From year to year I sigh in vain, for *time to play*, and *time to read*.  
 We come *so soon*, and leave *so late*, that nought we know but *mill*  
*and bed.*  
 They tell us you grow very rich, by little piec'ners such as me,  
 And that you're going to Parliament, to guard our laws and liberty,  
 They say you *pity* Negro Slaves, and vow, oppressors to restrain,  
 To break the chains of ignorance, and *Christian Principles* maintain.  
 Oh ! when you're there remember us, whilst at *your frames* we  
 labour still,  
 And give your best support and aid to Mr. Saddler's Ten Hours Bill.  
 The poor, we know, must work for bread, but, master, are not *we*  
 too young ?  
 Yet if such little ones *must* work, pray do not work us quite so long !  
 Your 'Christian Principles' now prove, and hearken to the piec'ners'  
 prayer,  
 Soon Christ in Judgment shall appear, remember, *you must meet us*  
*there.*"<sup>1</sup>

The other instance occurred in 1833, when Mr. H. Warburton had introduced what was known as the Anatomy Bill, called in Yorkshire the "Paupers' Dead Body Bill," which provided subjects out of the poor-house for doctors to cut up. As the wives and families of workmen in those days had no prospect before them but that of ending their days in

<sup>1</sup> The italics are given as I find them.

the poor-house, they did not like this Bill, which they believed was intended to bring them all to the dissecting-room. At the same time, Mr. Wilson Patten, instead of supporting the Ten Hours Bill, which the poor people believed would render pauper subjects scarce, had proposed a commission to inquire into Factory labour, but that subject, they thought, had been inquired into enough, and they thought the Commission a trick intended to delay passing the Bill. It is a custom of Parliament when people are mad and perishing for lack of some long-denied amelioration, to appoint a "Royal Commission" to inquire whether they want it. The young girl piecers, or the "pieceners," as they sometimes called themselves, addressed a letter to Mr. Wilson Patten, M.P. It was shorter than the previous address, somewhat more lyrical, but quite as much to the purpose in its way. It ran thus:—

"Have you no children of your own,  
Cold-hearted Wilson Patten?  
We wish you'd send Miss Pattens down  
All decked in silk and satin.

Just let them work a month with us,  
And 'doff' their nice apparel;  
And 'don' their 'brats' like one of us—  
We promise not to quarrel.

We'll curtsey low—say 'Ma'am' and 'Miss,'  
And teach them how to 'piece,' Sir;  
They shan't be *strapt* when aught's amiss,  
They shan't be treated rough, Sir.

We'll call them up at 'five o'clock,'  
When all is dark and dreary;  
No *miller* rude, their tears shall mock,  
Nor vex them when they're weary.

We'll guard them home when work is done,  
At seven or eight at night, Sir,  
We'll cheer them with our harmless fun,  
And never show our spite, Sir.

And when they've wrought a month at mill,  
If *they* do not petition  
For us to have the Ten Hour Bill,  
THEN SEND US YOUR 'COMMISSION.'"

In *Frazer's Magazine* at this period attention was called to the evidence of Mr. Gilbert Sharpe, the overseer of Keighley, Yorkshire, who was examined by the Factory Commission. He was asked whether he had any reason to think that any

children lost their lives in consequence of excessive work in the mills. He said he had no doubt of it, and he gave this instance. "Four or five months back, there was a girl of a poor man's that I was called to visit; she was poorly—she had attended a mill, and I was obliged to relieve the father in the course of my office, in consequence of the bad health of the child; by and by she went back to her work again, and one day he came to me with tears in his eyes. I said, 'What is the matter, Thomas?' He said, 'My little girl is dead.' I said, 'When did she die?' He said, 'In the night; and what breaks my heart is this: she went to the mill in the morning; she was not able to do work, and a little boy said he would assist her if she would give him a halfpenny on Saturday; I said I would give him a penny.'" But at night, when the child went home, perhaps about a quarter of a mile, in going home she fell down several times on the road through exhaustion, till at length she reached her father's door with difficulty.

Verse-writers with more or less skill put these facts into song. Here are two of the stanzas enforcing the argument of contrast of condition :—

"All night with tortured feeling,  
He watch'd his speechless child;  
While close beside her kneeling,  
She knew him not—nor smil'd.  
Again the factory's ringing,  
Her last perception's tried;  
When, from her straw-bed springing,  
'Tis time!' she shriek'd and died!

That night a chariot pass'd her  
While on the ground she lay;  
The daughters of her master  
An evening visit pay;  
Their tender hearts were sighing,  
As negro wrongs were told,  
While the white slave was dying,  
Who gain'd their father's gold."

This is true of another factory child, who just before died of consumption, induced by protracted factory labour. With the last breath upon her lips, she cried out, "Father, is it time?" and so died.

The true ground of resentment is not that employers should take children into workshops, for many workmen when they

become overseers, and derive a profit on child-labour, do the same thing ; it is that any workmen in England should be so base or so indigent as to send children into a workshop, and are not to be restrained save by an Act of Parliament. If unable to protect their children it showed a humiliating weakness, and it was high time that the better-natured sought power by combination to prevent it. This at least is to their credit. These dreary facts of factory life recounted were told in every household of workmen in the land, and no one can understand the fervour and force with which industrial conspiracies were entered into, who does not take them into account. Mr. Lucas Sargant, of Birmingham, has stated that, "though his interest as employer might lead him to deprecate trades unions and strikes, which have often caused him losses, he had declared in print his opinion that mechanics were wise to enter into such unions, and occasionally to have resort to strikes."

A sense of right and sympathy always connected co-operators with the industrial conspirators, allies, or advisers. It was on March 30, 1830, that Mr. Pare delivered his first public lecture in the Mechanics' Institution, Manchester. He appeared as the corresponding secretary of the first Birmingham Co-operative Society. It was Birmingham who first sent co-operation officially to Manchester. The editor of the *United Trades Co-operative Journal* wrote of Mr. Pare as being "A young man who impressed his audience by his earnestness and wide information," but objected to his tone as to trades unions. Mr. Pare did not speak in a directly hostile way of them, but suggested the inability and uselessness of combining to uphold wages. Mr. Pare had caught Mr. Owen's indifferent opinion of everything save the "new system." But at that early period co-operators were intelligent partisans of trades unions. The Manchester *United Trades Co-operative Journal* of May, 1830, justified trades unions by the memorable saying of Sir Robert Peel in the House of Commons: "I wish the people would see their own interests, and take the management of their affairs into their own hands." "Such is the advice," said the editor, which Mr. Peel, the Secretary of State, has given the working classes. It is rare indeed that public men, especially ministers of State,

offer such counsel, and it is still more rare for those to whom the advice is given to act upon it." It is a remarkable thing and a very honourable distinction that Sir Robert Peel should have conceived and given such advice. Trades Unions and Co-operation are two of the matured answers to it.

No advocate can influence others who is devoid of sympathy with them, and is not scrupulous in doing justice to their best qualities. Co-operative advocates have talked to unionists in as heartless a way as political economists, and attempt to change their policy of action by holding it up to ridicule as financially foolish. Education in independence which men pay for themselves, is a lesson those who learn it never forget, and is worth a good deal.

The difference between the trade unionist and the co-operative way of dealing with a strike is capable of historic illustration. In 1860 a famous strike took place in Colne, Lancashire. The weavers were out for fifty weeks and 4,000 looms were caused to be idle. Cogwheel, one of the weavers, put their case thus. He said, "In Colne there are 4,000 looms. In East Lancashire there are 90,000 looms. If the Colne strike had not taken place the prices all over East Lancashire would have been reduced to the Colne standard, and therefore East Lancashire saved money by contributing £20,000 to the Colne strike." Dr. Watts put the co-operative view of the strike not less concisely thus: "If the Colne people, instead of going on strike for fifty weeks, had kept at work and lived on half-wages, as they had to do during the strike, and had saved the other half, and if the East Lancashire people had subscribed £20,000, as they did, towards keeping the Colne people on strike, the result at the end of fifty weeks would have been £54,000 in hand, and at £15 a loom that money would have set to work in perpetuity for the hands themselves 3,600 looms out of the 4,000 in Colne! The selfsame effort which threw them into beggary would have raised them into independence."<sup>1</sup>

The co-operator holds that the right thing to do is to prepare for self-employment before striking. A trades-union strike is a contest of starvation. It is the siege of the fortress of capital with a view to its reduction by famine, in which the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. John Watts, Lecture, 1861.



besiegers are more likely to perish than the besieged. It seems the modest device of war when the belligerents who have the least strength render themselves helpless in order to fight. The Comte de Paris happily compares a strike and lock-out to a Japanese duel, in which each combatant is under obligation to honour to put himself to death with his own hand.

Where trade unions limit the freedom of others in working its union, action is tyranny. Lord Derby has told the case. "If what you are doing is for your own interest and for that of your fellow-workmen, in time those who now stand aloof will join you. In the meantime, 999 men out of 1,000 have no more right to control the single dissentient than the one would have, were it in his power, to control them. There is hardly a despotism since the world began that has not founded itself on the same plea that it would carry into effect more surely than free citizens the recognised will of the majority. To refuse to recognise the freedom of your neighbours is the first step towards losing your own."<sup>1</sup>

The hasty acts and imputations of ignorant workmen have often provoked employers to high-handed injustice. Yet any one conversant with the literature of strikes must be well aware that the tone and language of men has been far more moderate and deferential to masters than that of masters has been fair and considerate to the men. The *United Trades Co-operative Journal* of Manchester relates that in 1830 the dressers and dyers of Manchester and Salford formed a Co-operative Society, the master spinners having a private trades union of their own, had turned out simultaneously all their hands owing to a dispute about wages, and the master dyer had turned all his men out because they wanted an hour for dinner and he would only give them half an hour. The men fearing all their comrades would be turned out by a general conspiracy of their masters, resolved to begin work for themselves; but as all the premises suitable were in possession of masters, they were driven from Ancoats to Pemberton before they could commence operations. The masters being holders of all suitable property, or able to influence others who held it, pursued their hands with malevolence.

<sup>1</sup> Earl Derby, Opening of Trades' Hall, Liverpool, October, 1869.

Hundreds of strikes would have been averted, years of sullenness and bitterness would have been avoided, had employers reconciled themselves to the admission that workmen were so far equals as to be entitled to conference and explanation. Middle-class masters have been repellent. They would not condescend to confer. They would receive no committee, they would admit no delegates to their counting-house. It was co-operators who first taught working people how to respect themselves and to cease entreaty. They said, "Do not discuss with employers, dispense with them." None but co-operators could give this proud counsel.<sup>1</sup> The great Newcastle-on-Tyne strike of 1866 had been avoided, if employers concerned, who were known to have good feeling towards men, had had ordinary condescension.

In Newcastle-on-Tyne the *Daily Chronicle* did more than any other newspaper to prevent loss to employers, by a generous and considerate advocacy of the claims of workmen. Where it could not approve their claims, it conceded them free publicity of their case and the grounds on which they rested it. Thus violence was averted which has occurred in other places where workmen have been denied access to the press and treated with contemptuous exclusion, or subjected to contemptuous criticism which they were not allowed to answer.

Nor have the arguments oft employed by capitalists to restrain union action been well chosen. Workmen were intimidated by being told that they would drive the trade of the country out of it. This consideration did cause many of them to hesitate. In time they came to the conclusion that if they could not get living wages at home, they would be driven out of the country themselves, and therefore, if they did "drive the work out of the country," there might come this advantage to them—that they would know where to find it when they were driven out after it. Indeed, it was obvious that if trade could not be kept in England except by workmen consenting to accept starvation wages, it could not be kept in England at all—for men on low wages would emigrate sooner or later.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. William Nuttall. Speech in the City Hall, at the opening of the Glasgow Wholesale Society, September 19, 1873.

Few can be aware of what has been the experience of living men, or there would be less severity in the judgment of those who labour. One bit of real life is more conclusive than many arguments. The president of the Rochdale Co-operative Society in 1847, Mr. George Adcroft, told me to-day (October 3, 1877) that when he worked in the pit, men got coal without even a shirt on. They worked absolutely naked, and their daughters worked by their side. This was seventy years ago. It was the rule then for the men to be kept at work as long as there were waggons at the pit mouth waiting to be filled. He and others were commonly compelled to work sixteen hours a day ; and from week's end to week's end they never washed either hands or face. One Saturday night (he was then a lad of fifteen) he and others had worked till twelve o'clock, still there were waggons at the pit mouth. They at last rebelled—refused to work any later. The banksman went and told the employer, who came and waited till they were drawn up to the mouth and beat them with a stout whip as they came to the surface. Despite the lashes they clambered up the chain cage, got hold of the whip, and tried to kill the master. Negro slavery was not much worse than that. Mr. Adcroft states that a man who had worked the long hours he describes would not earn more than 17s. or 19s. a week, and half of that would be stopped for "tommy," on the truck system. Living unionists who passed through this state of things were not well trained for taking a dispassionate and philosophical view of the relations of capital and labour.

So long as the workman had enough to do to keep himself from the poor-house, he could not be expected to think much about the pride of an order which had nothing to eat. The invention of the spinning jenny superseded the small spinning-rooms by which so many lived, with some control over their humble fortunes. The jenny drove thousands into mills, where they were at the mercy of capital and panics. Manufacturing by machinery put an end to most of the little workshops, and pride in handicraft which a man felt when the credit or discredit of his work was connected with himself. Any reputation he was enabled now to acquire in the mill passed to the credit of the firm who employed him. He

became merely a machine, a little more trouble to manage than those patented, and he sank, as an artificer, into little more consideration than a man in a large prison, who is known by his number instead of his name. He had no longer a character to acquire or to lose. He was only "one of the hands"; his health, his subsistence, or his recreation died out also. The commencement of the trades unions of the modern kind was the first evidence the workman gave of understanding that he must do something for his own protection. That he blundered in the method he adopted—that his efforts were marked by waste, coercion, and retaliation, were small things compared with the great merit that he struggled at all for some elevation. In late years he has had information enough to improve his methods. Yet no unionist leaders have arisen until the time of Thomas Burt, M.P., who have comprehended, in the same degree as he, the new possibilities of the day. Mechanics' institutions were established by Dr. Birkbeck, Lord Brougham, Francis Place, and others, which languished for years. The class-rooms were more or less tenantless, the teachers had few pupils. Had trades unionists understood what knowledge would do for their children, had they taken note of the inferiority of their sons compared with the educated sons of middle-class masters under whom they worked, they would have crowded the mechanics' institutions with their own sons. The higher manners, the preciser speech, the greater capacity, the more disciplined mind, the tone of intellectual authority shown by the sons of their employers, should have taught them once and for ever that education was the only equality in their power, and they should have insisted that the sons of every member of the union should be sent to the mechanics' institution. The leaders of the people who first devised mechanics' institutions expected that this would be done. The enemies of the people who disliked "institutes," and distrusted them, and feared them, thought so too. Church dignitaries, Conservative politicians, alarmed employers, and country squires united to condemn the dangerous innovation of knowledge which would make the people discontented with "the position to which it had pleased God to call them." All those fears were as foolish as they were wicked. The workmen had, unhappily, not sufficient



sense of their own interests, and needed no restraining from using the means of power placed at their disposal. They were without the intelligence even to see their opportunity.

The great trade guilds of London have mainly sunk into private dining societies.<sup>1</sup> They do not represent the great traditions of industrial pride. The modern masters of guilds are without even the capacity to feel the inspiration which made their forefathers the leaders of art in industry. To-day, indeed, we hear of the Turners' Company of London, awakening from their long, ignoble sleep, offering prizes to young handicraftsmen for skill at the lathe; and the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, distinguished for discerning generosity, has given the largest sum to be expended in this way. This is what trades unions ought to have done long years ago, they should have given prizes to the best workmen in each trade. They could have had the money for asking. The first persons in the State would have done them the honour of distributing their prizes. The character of English workmen would have stood the highest in the world in skill and in the self-respecting dignity of labour. No man should be admitted into a trade union unless he is a good workman, or willing to be made one, and his being allowed to remain a member should be a guarantee to the public that he has skill which can be trusted. Now, a man being a unionist is small guarantee to any one that he will not scamp his work or do the least for the most he can get. Some of the first workmen of the day, and men of character and good faith in work, are members of trades unions, but good skill and good faith are nowhere made the conditions of membership. A trades union council are not leaders of art in industry; they are, with a few exceptions, mere connoisseurs in strikes. All a union does is to strike against low wages; they never strike against doing bad work. It will be a great thing for the reputation of industry in England when they do this. Now they cover themselves with the excuse that their employers want bad and cheap things made. There is no moral difference in doing bad work and picking the purchaser's pocket. A bungler is but a thief

<sup>1</sup> See "City Companies," by Walter Henry James, M.P. (since Lord Northbourne).



with a circumbendibus in his method. Trades unions ought to resent the demand that their members should do bad work, as an affront upon their character as workmen. A few well-devised strikes on this principle would raise wages as no union has ever done yet, and, what is not less important, raise the whole character of industry in England in a few years. This is one form of the organisation of labour wanted.

It is fair to own that trades unionists recognise the importance of their efficiency as workmen. Several Congresses of trades have passed resolutions applauding the attainment of technical knowledge by workmen. The Society of Arts at the Adelphi, London, which does so much for the advancement of popular knowledge, issues yearly a programme of technological examinations, in which mechanics of leading trades and men engaged in agriculture are offered an opportunity of proving their practical knowledge of the nature of their employment. When they have done so certificates of three degrees of proficiency are awarded them, various prizes in money, and even scholarships. Mr. George Howell for years transmitted the necessary documents to different trades to induce workmen to enter into these competitions. This, however, is only approval of knowledge, not insistence upon it. There is more original artistic thought and pride among the artisan class than they are credited with. The Matsys and Cellinis are not extinct. The famous blacksmiths and gold workers have merely had their genius turned in other directions by science. The old artists who worked for fame in their obscure chambers are succeeded by men who expend genius and devotion in devising wondrous machinery. They are Pygmalsions of invention who impart to inanimate metal the miraculous action of living intelligence. They think in poverty—they die neglected, and their splendid ingenuity enriches the nation. The acclaim of their genius never reaches the dull, cold ear of death. In later generations the tardy monumental bust is erected over their forgotten graves. The Patent Office is the record of their fine patience and unrequited skill. Mr. George Wallis has discerningly pointed out that the originality of the artisan class is expressed in machinery in these days. Living unnoted men see hidden

things in mechanics which would have made Archimedes famous.

Some people are manifestly born before their time ; some are born after—a very long while after—and in any well-regulated system ought to be put back again. There are others apparently born for no time in particular ; they are neither offensive nor useful, but chiefly in the way of other people ; while there are others who belong to the age and know it, who comprehend very well the opportunities of the hour, who employ them and mean to put them to account. The alliance between co-operators and trade unionists has been of long standing. On the 21st of April, 1834, Mr. Owen headed the great procession to Lord Melbourne to ask the release of the Dorchester labourers. The unionists assembled in Copenhagen Fields. Lord Melbourne agreed to receive a limited deputation of leaders at Downing Street. On the list of names handed in to him Mr. Owen's name was not included, it being probably thought that Mr. Owen being known to Lord Melbourne would be admitted. His lordship, preferring to see the men alone, refused to see any one not on the list he had assented to. Thus the interview took place without the assistance of their most important advocate.

During the early period of the co-operative movement the Socialists and Unionists might be heard from the same platform advocating their respective principles.<sup>1</sup> At Salford the society opened a subscription to support a strike.<sup>2</sup> In London Mr. Owen was elected the Grand Master of a lodge, and he permitted the trade societies to use his lecture hall.<sup>3</sup> The *Crisis* added to its title that of *National Co-operative Trades Union and Equitable Exchange Gazette*. Mr. Owen specially charged himself to effect the release of the Dorchester convicts, but the demonstration which took place on the occasion is said to have exercised an unfortunate influence by increasing the severity of the Government.<sup>4</sup> But that was not Mr. Owen's fault. It rested with those who devised a demonstration which could only increase the alarm which led to the severity the procession

<sup>1</sup> *Crisis*, vol. iii. p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>3</sup> *New Moral World*, vol. i. p. 403.

<sup>4</sup> *Crisis*, vol. iii. p. 253. See Mr. Booth's "Life of R. Owen."

sought to stop. Mr. Owen must have depended on other influence than that of the streets to effect the release of the men.

Trades unions are simply fighting powers on behalf of labour, just as employers' unions are fighting powers on behalf of capital. Masters' unions do not concern themselves with the improvement of manufactures, with excellence of material, or equitable charges to the public. So far as their action appears they consult only the preservation of profits. On the other hand, workmen's unions, as such, mainly charge themselves with the protection or increase of wages. They can issue advice to workmen to refuse, as far as possible, to work except for employers where a partnership of industry exists. It is quite as legitimate for them to strike against employers who refuse this, as to strike against those who refuse increase of wages. Indeed, strikes for partnerships would be fairer than strikes for wages, because in partnerships the profits must be earned before they can be had ; whereas in strikes for wages the employer is simply plundered if he is forced to yield where he cannot really afford it, just as the public are plundered when unions of capitalists, or merchants, combine to raise at will the price of commodities which the public must have.

Even at Co-operative Congresses now, we hear from leaders who are making profits in joint-stock companies, vigorous arguments against conceding to workmen a share of profits. They say, just as competitive employers have always said, capital takes all the risks and the workman has his share of the profits in his wages. Asking for what they are pleased to denominate a "bonus" on labour, they treat the demand as a gift, and if it is granted they describe it as proceeding from the "benevolence" of the employer. It is time this chatter of charity on the part of capitalists was ended. A co-operative store or a co-operative workshop, where the profits belong to the producers, is a mutual arrangement. But competition is not an arrangement ; it is war. The interests of capital and labour are in conflict ; and the demands for participation in profits after capital, management, and expenses have been paid, is no hostile act. Capital as a rule gives the least it can, and labour as a rule exacts the most

it can. In Co-operation mutual arrangement renders the equitable divisions of profit a right, and "bonus" and "benevolence" pernicious and offensive terms.

When at the Amsterdam Exhibition some years ago I went one day, at the invitation of Baron Mackay (since Lord Reay), to see the great works of the new canal out in the Zuyder Zee. Far away on the sands 'mid the North Sea I found what I took to be a Dutch chapel. Its pretty overhanging roofs and quaint desks and seats within, all out there, surprised me. On asking what it was, I was told it was the school-house for the education of the children of the Dutch workmen, employed in cutting and building the mighty canal through plains of sand lying out in the North Sea. "Why do you erect a school-house out here?" I inquired of the chief contractor, who was a Scot. "You do nothing of the kind in your own country. Contractors do nothing of the kind in England." "Oh," was the reply, "it is a convenience for the workmen's families." "Yes, I understand all that," I answered, "but what sets you upon consulting their convenience in Holland when you never think of it elsewhere?" "Well, the truth is," he at last admitted, "that the Dutch workmen having good secular schools in every town where their children can be educated, and knowing the advantages of it, having profited themselves when young by it, will not work for any one who does not provide schools where their families can be trained." This shows what intelligent workmen can do who have the sense to understand their own interests, and this is what English workmen might do with respect to education and participation of profits, if they had as much wit and determination as the drowsy, dreaming, much-smoking, but clear-minded, resolute Dutch.

Adjoining the school-house was a large co-operative store, exactly on the plan of the one first devised by Robert Owen at Lanark. It consisted of a large wood building containing large stores of provisions, lodged there by the contractors and put in charge of a storekeeper, who sold them at cost price—less his wages as salesman. This was a further economy for the men; it made their wages go farther, and was an additional source of contentment to them, costing the employers nothing save forethought and good feeling. This was the

only co-operative store I ever found on the ocean ; it lay in mid-seas.

Though Co-operation is an English movement, its history takes us a good deal over the world—for as we have said elsewhere—Co-operative devices of industry have appeared in other countries during two centuries past. Groups of men acting together for their own advantage are historic features of many lands ; and countless undertakings, not bearing the co-operative name, illustrate the inspiration of the spirit and power of concert.

“The Conflicts of Labour and Capital—a History and Review of Trades Unions,” by George Howell, may be mentioned as the ablest book yet produced by an English Trade Unionist leader, as the work of Nadaud is the best produced by a French workman. In point of weight of authority and exhaustive treatment Mr. W. T. Thornton’s volume on “Labour” stands next to the writings of Mr. J. S. Mill. The philosophy and practice of Unionism and Co-operation are dealt with by Mr. Thornton with a completeness and impartiality not elsewhere to be found.



## CHAPTER XXX

## CO-OPERATIVE FAILURES

"If thou wishest to be wise,  
Keep these lines before thine eyes ;  
If thou speakest—how beware !  
Of whom, to whom, and when and where."

BYRON.

WHERE the principle of Industrial Partnership is adopted by workmen it is sometimes superseded rather than abandoned. Outsiders come in as shareholders, and not caring for Co-operation, they seize the society as soon as they are able, outvote the co-operative members, and convert it into a joint-stock business, which they believe to be more immediately profitable to them. This was the way the Mitchell Hey Society at Rochdale fell. Though these instances are but perversions, the business is still conducted by working men, which implies that a larger number of working men are acquiring the skill of masters. This is a progress after its kind, though wanting in the principle of equity and equality, which Co-operation aims to introduce among workmen. There have been no co-operative failures, save from errors into which commercial men of greater experience occasionally fall. Dr. John Watts has given an account of the failure of the Queenwood community. As he was one of those concerned in it, his evidence has weight. He says "the failure of the Hampshire community was attributable, amongst other causes, firstly, to the extravagant price paid for very poor land; secondly, to the large amount of capital sunk in buildings which were not profitably occupied; and, thirdly, to the attempt to convert skilled artisans, used to good wages, into

agriculturists upon bad land; and to satisfy them with agricultural labourers' fare, and no money wages."<sup>1</sup>

The tone of the press is greatly changed toward the failures of working men in their manufacturing enterprises. In days of the limited and dear press, newspapers mostly represented the interests of masters; when a working-class enterprise failed the matter was mentioned with contemptuous derision, and was treated as a warning to men not to exhibit the presumption that they could be masters. When a failure occurs to working men now, it is thought to be a misfortune that they are not able to better their condition by industrial enterprise. If their failure has arisen through an unforeseen rise in prices, which made their contracts unprofitable, or through the bankruptcy of customers owing them money whose solvency they had no reason to doubt when they took their orders,<sup>2</sup> or if the losses of the men have arisen from unexpected decay of trade, the same allowance is made now in the judgment of their failure as is made in the case of other manufacturers who conduct business on competitive principles.

When the Ouseburn Engine Works failed the *Eastern Daily Press* remarked that "Mr. Holyoake would have to chronicle that in his History," which he certainly intended to do; but in justice to the *Eastern Press* I record that that failure was judged in that journal upon its merits. It was not, as formerly would have been the case, set down as a failure of the co-operative principle, but regarded as arising from errors in business management, and the outside causes of the loss were fairly taken into account. The main source of failure was a series of contracts made by an agent (£30,000 under their values), which no manager who understood his business would have permitted.

The co-operators are the most open creatures who ever entered into business. So far from concealing a failure, they proclaim it too loudly, their desire being that all may take note what to avoid in the future. When the Ouseburn Engine Works had lost the £30,000 through Dr. Rutherford making suspicious contracts, the fact was publicly pro-

<sup>1</sup> "Co-operative Societies," Dr. J. Watts.

<sup>2</sup> Both these causes operated greatly in producing the failure of the Ouseburn Engine Works at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

claimed. He was not dismissed, nor did he resign, so that the co-operators were the pity of all the Tyneside for remaining under the management which had brought the great disaster upon them. Incapacity is of the nature of a crime when it meddles with the fortune of a struggling cause, or does not take itself away when its incompetence is plainly perilous. The Ouseburn workmen behaved admirably. When they were informed that false contracts had been taken, involving the enormous loss cited, it was open to them to avenge themselves by executing the work badly; but they honestly resolved to execute it to the best of their ability notwithstanding, and they did so; and no engine works on the Tyneside ever won higher credit for honest and perfect workmanship. They got through their great and unjustifiable losses. It was by failure of subsequent creditors that the concern fell into liquidation.

People who hear now and then of the failure of co-operative engine works or mines imagine they forbode the end of that system and do not take into account that other persons who are not workmen, and who are experienced in business, fail also. At the time of the Ouseburn difficulty the *Daily Chronicle*, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, published a list of the failures which had occurred in Cleveland in the course of twelve months, with the amount of the liability in five cases. The following is the list :—

Sivert Hjerlid, ironfounder, Middlesbrough.  
 North Yorkshire Iron Co., Limited.  
 W. A. Stevenson, iron merchant.  
 Eston Grange Iron Co., Eston.  
 Thomas Richardson & Sons.  
 Nicholas Raine, South Hylton Ironworks.  
 R. Jaques, Richmond Ironworks, Stockton.  
 J. H. Garbutt, coalowner, Darlington.  
 E. Watteau, bolt and nut manufacturer, Middlesbrough.  
 Erimus Iron Company, Middlesbrough.  
 F. Ireland, iron merchant, Middlesbrough.  
 Middlesbrough Cut Nail Works.  
 Stockton Rail Mill Co., Stockton.  
 The Britannia Iron Company, Middlesbrough.  
 Ross, Willis & Co., Middlesbrough.  
 Thos. Vaughan & Co., Middlesbrough.  
 J. B. Walker, shipowner, Middlesbrough.  
 Swan, Coates & Co., Middlesbrough.  
 Raylton, Dixon & Co., shipbuilders, Middlesbrough.  
 Thos. Charlton & Co., coal and ironstone mine owners, Middlesbrough.  
 South Cleveland Iron Co., Limited.  
 The Lackenby Iron Co., Middlesbrough.

R. H. Charlton, Stranton Ironworks, Hartlepool.  
 Messrs. Thomas & Co., ironfounders, Middlesbrough.  
 J. W. Thomas, Acklam Refinery.  
 West Hartlepool Iron Co., Limited.

					Liabilities.
Thos. Vaughan & Co.	...	...	...	...	£1,200,000
Swan, Coates & Co.	...	...	...	...	280,000
Lackenby Iron Co.	...	...	...	...	200,000
R. Dixon & Co.	...	...	...	...	175,000
Messrs. Charlton	..	...	...	...	270,000
					<u>£2,125,000</u>

Only one of these firms was expected to pay more than 5s. in the pound.

Some years ago the Wholesale Society of Glasgow lost £10,000 by an investment made without their formal authority. There was, however, no doubt that the investment, though irregular, was made in good faith, and had it turned out fortunate it had been applauded. The Society remembered this, and quietly provided for the loss, and took precautions that the same thing should not occur again. Not long ago the Halifax Society lost £60,000 by injudicious investment in Foreign Securities. The members behaved like men of business. They knew that had the large profits they calculated upon accrued, they would have thought their directors "smart fellows." They did not break up their society as a few wild members, stimulated by shopkeepers, proposed; and as their predecessors did a generation earlier, on the loss of less than 160th part of that sum. They simply arranged to repair the loss from future profits, and made a note to invest more prudently in future. Working men who have acquired this kind of good sense will very rarely stumble into failure.

If a series of failures disproved a principle, what must be said of the failures of competition, where twenty men fail for one who succeeds? Had any one invented competition it would have been hooted out of the world long ago as an infernal contrivance of spite and greed. To use a phrase made picturesque by Mr. Henley in the House of Commons, competition is an "ugly rush"—an ugly rush after bones, which everybody is equally ambitious to pick. As to failure, what are the failures of banking? Let those hideous, criminal, calamitous failures be catalogued, and banking must be pro-

nounced unsound in principle. Co-operation, in its most unfortunate days, will bear comparison with banking.

Messrs. Fox, Head & Co., of Middlesbrough, proposed, with fair intentions, a partnership of industry with their men ; but stipulated that the men should give up their trades unions and sign a contract to that effect. The company on their part agreed to withdraw from the masters' union. They were at liberty to please themselves in this matter. But the condition they exacted from the men was a degrading condition. What was it to them to what purposes the men put their earnings so long as they fulfilled their contract with them ? The proceeding of this company was an abuse of industrial partnership, and calculated to bring it into disrepute. It had been far better had they never touched the question.

The Messrs. Briggs, of the Whitwood Collieries, brought their scheme to an end in a similar spirit. Their partnership with their men brought them great gain while it lasted. Some years several thousands of pounds were divided among their workmen, being merely the half-profits made by the increased exertion and care of the men, apart from the exceptional profits of the years when the price of coal rose greatly. But the total made in the way of profit while the partnership lasted has never been declared.<sup>1</sup> The Messrs. Briggs appear to have taken advantage of their men attending a certain trades union meeting, which they had forbidden them to attend, to exclude them from the partnership, and even to withhold from some the money they had earned in the partnership. This dictation to their men in matters outside their duties to the company, was a disastrous lesson to set the men. It has been inferred that the company found strikes less expensive than fulfilling an honourable partnership. They may have terminated it because it was more troublesome to them than their interest in the welfare of their men induced them to take. They have given no satisfactory explanation of the facts, financial or otherwise, involved in the case. The

<sup>1</sup> The most remarkable statement is that given by the Comte de Paris, who says : " In 1867 Messrs. Briggs realised a net profit of £20,417 after paying all outlays and allowing for wear and tear. A portion only of this sum was divided. £8,000 was laid by in order to secure a bonus to the men in the bad years that might come. In Mr. Briggs' opinion the old system would not have yielded equal profits under similar circumstances " (" Trades Unions of England," by Comte de Paris, p. 219).



failure, so far as it is known, has not been on the part of the men, but on the part of their employers.

When the Messrs. Briggs first proposed to adopt some plan of co-operative partnership in their collieries, I received from them several letters explanatory of their objects, and of the difficulties which presented themselves. With a view to promote their wise intention, to diminish obstacles which the prejudices of trades unionists might entertain towards the project, and to support the Messrs. Briggs in their views, to justify them in the eyes of other employers, and to increase their public credit for taking a lead in so useful and honourable a design, I solicited opinions of the project from Mr. John Stuart Mill, Professor Fawcett, Louis Blanc, and others, to whom I explained the possible industrial advantages of it. The letters I received were published, and the words of honour spoken of these employers by such friends of equitable industry were repeated in their praise. In any way I could I was glad to strengthen their hands; but the letters I received at that time from the Messrs. Briggs did not make me very sanguine that they would carry their plan through, or persevere in it from conviction of its public advantage. They manifestly inherited a distrust of workmen. They imputed venality and self-interest to leading unionists who advised their men. They thought too much of disparaging and destroying trade unions. They spoke too much of the proposed participation of profits as a "bonus" to the men, as though it were a largess or gracious gift to the workmen arising from their employers' goodness of disposition and depending for its continuance upon the good behaviour of their hands. Their plan was complex, there were too many conditions, and even the conditions were conditional. It would, however, be unfair to make much of these peculiarities. The project was new in their business. They could not foresee to what administrative inconvenience it might lead. Conflicting claims, interest, and prejudices are always called into play when any new plan is adopted among the working class more or less uninformed, or unfamiliar with it. These were real difficulties which might well render the best-disposed employers uncertain as to the measures to which they would commit themselves. Besides, the Messrs. Briggs were not themselves co-operators. The principle and definite

line of thought which Co-operation implies must have been strange to them. It therefore remains a credit to them that they entertained the idea of establishing co-operative relations in their works, and actually attempted it. It would be scant encouragement to other employers to try the same thing if those who do try it, and do not succeed in carrying it forward, or turn back discouraged, were to be treated with less consideration than those who never made any attempt of the kind. What Mr. J. S. Mill thought of their attempt he stated very strongly in his letter to me from Saint Veran, Avignon (Nov. 21, 1864). "The Messrs. Briggs have done themselves great honour in being the originators in England of one of the two modes in Co-operation which are probably destined to divide the field of employment between them. The importance of what they are doing is the greater, as its success would make it almost impossible hereafter for any recreant co-operative societies to go back to the old plan of paying only fixed wages when even private capitalists give it up." Unfortunately they have returned to fixed wages and given comfort thereby to others besides "recreant co-operative societies."

The failures of co-operative stores have been infrequent. Their success as a rule is so overwhelming that any failures have been due to common neglect of well-defined precautions which experience has established. Mr. J. C. Farn has relevantly pointed out that "the art of organisation was in its infancy thirty years ago; now (1878), if it is incomplete in practice, it arises from neglect, and not for want of models. Popular intolerance in days gone by was a hundred times more powerful than it is now. Without tolerance, societies cannot permanently succeed. The co-operative ship of thirty years since had to sail over the sea of difficulty without chart or compass. Now the rocks are known and marked dangerous, none but unskilful or neglectful pilots need allow the ship to strike upon them. Finally, with more members, more money, more experience, more support, more confidence, more tolerance, and sounder views, there is no reason to believe that the disasters of former times will be repeated."

One source of distrust to which co-operative enterprises are subject arises in the enthusiasm in which they are often commenced. The projectors of a new company, conscious of the

purity of their own intentions, behave just as knaves do, when they set floating a fraudulent scheme. They deprecate all inquiry into it, and regard any one who points out objections or difficulties to be encountered, as a disagreeable person who wants to damp the enthusiasm of others, and destroy the prospects of a company which he does not intend to help. The enthusiastic promoters are so strong in the honesty of their intentions, that they imagine their wisdom to be as obvious as their integrity, and regard doubts of their success as imputations upon themselves ; they do not perceive that just objects, and noble aims, though necessary to the success of an unusual enterprise, do not necessarily make it successful. There must be fair business prospects and fair business sense in addition, in order that great interest may be taken in any project. There must be confidence in the capacity as well as the honour of those who promote it ; and confidence depends upon the knowledge of the persons and purposes of those with whom it is proposed to work ; and it is wisdom in the promoters of any new company to furnish this information, without waiting to be asked for it. It is good policy to solicit all the objections that can be made at the outset of a concern, so that they may not come when it is too late to profit by them. The objector is a very valuable person, if enthusiasts knew how to profit by him. Enthusiasm, desire of personal distinction, or hope of profit, is apt to blind the understanding, and the wise objector (if he can be found) is the oculist who opens the eyes of the company, and enables the members to see what the facts of the case really are. It matters not how strong or peculiar the points urged in opposition may be, the general soundness of a sound scheme can always be shown, and shown to far greater advantage when the objector has given his evidence against it in open court, than it could before he was heard. If the soundness of the project cannot, then, be made clear, it is better for all concerned that the difficulty should be apparent. Objections may be disallowed, or overruled, but they should be heard, and considered as far as their relevance seems to warrant. When this is done, the shareholders find themselves well advised and candidly informed, and they go into the undertaking with their eyes open ; and if it does not answer they have nobody to reproach but themselves. They feel none of

the bitterness of men who have been misled by others, and they even feel respect for those who afforded them so fair an opportunity of knowing the truth ; and the failure involves no loss of self-respect to any one, since a fair measure of prudence had marked the proceedings. But if critics, suggestors, or objectors, who do the society the service of volunteering advice upon its affairs, are put down as offensive or suspicious persons, the interest of members is foolishly jeopardised. If the promoters of a doubtful or dishonest company succeed in obtaining the money of the shareholders, everybody can see that it is as criminal a thing as though that money had been taken by an act of burglary, and is more irritating to those who lose by it, because insidious professions have made them parties to their own loss. The wrong done by honest, earnest projectors of schemes is not less serious in its results because unintended. But their honest intentions do not absolve them from criminality, if they have incurred risks without the fullest inquiry possible into them, and without communicating the results of that inquiry to all whom they invited to share those risks with them. Of course there are projects continually started where the profits depend upon celerity and secrecy of action. In these cases it is obvious that to solicit objections from outsiders would betray the purpose. In such concerns only a few persons are ever engaged, and they know perfectly what they are doing, and do not go about complaining if their money is lost. It is public companies where shareholders are sought among persons of large and small means alike, and who invest money and trust in the honour and capacity of the directors of the company, that a scrupulous and complete information should be furnished, as a matter of fair precaution and good faith. It should be a matter of pride in co-operators that no failure should take place among them. Their aim should be to acquire the reputation not only for honesty, but for soundness of judgment, and sureness of procedure. In the days of Harry Clasper and Robert Chambers it was known that when Newcastle oarsmen rowed a match upon any river, they would win if they could—they were never to be bought. They contested for the honour of the Tyneside ; and co-operators should always be known as contesting for the honour of Co-operation.



A frequent source of failure arises from a cause which involves no imputation upon the honesty of those concerned—that is, “commencing a project with too little capital.” Though this implies merely want of judgment, the effect of failure is the same upon the outside public, who never trouble to notice why a thing fails. The failure itself is enough for them, and the cause with which it is connected is damaged in their eyes. “Insufficiency of capital” is so vague a cause, and is so often used as an excuse for graver errors, that nobody accepts it for much. It depends upon whether the scale of expenditure had been prudent and cautious from the beginning, whether the capital is really too small. Deficiency may be produced by imprudent and disproportionate expenditure. Deficiency of capital is of course a distinct and determinable cause of failure, and should be guarded against like any other. It often arises through enthusiasm which impels premature action. A meeting is called to consider whether a new scheme can be undertaken. Good and approving plaudits will soon be heard, if the proposal be popular. Some generous person is inspired by the hearty applause to make a liberal offer of support. He probably mistakes the enthusiasm for intelligent, well-considered purpose. Professor Tyndall has proved that heat is a mode of motion. Prof. Crooks has proved that light is a source of movement, and delicate machines have been contrived for estimating these forces. But no one has invented a machine which will denote the quality of applause; some men applaud because they are impulsive, some because they approve of the proposal, some because they intend to help it—when it succeeds; but the greater part applaud because they think somebody else is going to aid it; and it frequently comes to pass that experiments are commenced under the contagion of chequeless enthusiasm, which only considerable capital can carry out. There are always sanguine and dangerous people, who think a right thing will get support if it is once begun. But wise promoters should never permit action to be taken till reasonable means of carrying it out are secured.

A man who has had experience in popular movements becomes a connoisseur in enthusiasm, and is disposed to analyse it before he counts upon it as an element of action. When Mr. Forster was proposing his 25th clause to the Education



Act in the House of Commons he stretched out his arm before the Opposition, and informed them he had Puritan blood in his veins. I begged a member who happened to be in the Speaker's gallery at the time to go down and ask Mr. Forster to put a drop of that blood into his Bill. The Nonconformists said "the blood would do no good, it was of a degenerate quality." I asked Professor Huxley whether he could analyse one of the globules that we might know whether the quality was pure. This is what has to be done with popular enthusiasm, its blood must be tested before it can be trusted. If this were oftener done failures of co-operative enterprise, though small in number now, would be fewer still.

A considerable number of manufacturing and productive societies have been formed which have included the principle of partnership with labour, which have scarcely gone beyond the publication of rules. In some instances capital has not been subscribed sufficient to enable the undertaking to be commenced, or not sufficient to carry on business long enough for success. In other cases the accession of new shareholders who joined for profit mainly, not caring about improving the general relations of labour to capital, have, when profits were low, voted against sharing them with workmen. Sometimes they have done this because the profits were great, and they became covetous of obtaining all for themselves. Such shareholders being shrewd, and not caring for the advancement of workmen, have calculated that the cost of strikes was less than the loss, through conceding a share of profit to the men, have deliberately elected to take the risk of strikes, and rescinded the rule of participation. In a new business, depending for prosperity upon sales in the market, greater capital often becomes necessary than was at first calculated upon; and being exigent it becomes necessary to take from any subscribers of shares who may offer, without inquiry as to whether they are co-operators or not. In the early days of Co-operation every society instituted a propagandist department, for winning co-operators to join them, or of educating them afterwards. Where this is not done, and shareholders are received without precaution, principle is left at the mercy of new members, and often drifts and disappears. In this way principle was cancelled very early in the Rochdale Co-operative Manufacturing

Society of Mitchell Hey. In this way it was attempted to be destroyed in the Hebden Bridge Fustian Co-operative Society, but happily resisted successfully by the loyalty of a sufficient number of the members. The "Fustian" had not got into their brains.

It is no matter of discouragement that even co-operators turn back after proceeding for awhile along the new path. Many make their way badly along an unaccustomed road, and naturally return again to the old trodden path with which they are familiar. All men must live somehow, and industrial or commercial fighting is the only general way in which men have been able to sustain themselves. Until adventurous pioneers show how the needs of life can be better commanded, the timid, or rapacious, impatient, or distrustful will be uncertain adherents.

## CHAPTER XXXI

## AMERICAN SOCIETIES

As wine and oil are imported to us from abroad, so must ripe understanding and many civil virtues be imported into our minds from foreign writings : we shall else miscarry still, and come short in the attempts of any great enterprise.—MILTON's *Hist. of Brit.*, Book iii.

THE English students of co-operative science found hospitality for their ideas in America when they found none in England. No English journal of the importance and character of the *New York Tribune*, founded by Horace Greeley, ever accorded the attention to it, the hearing to it, or the vindication of it which he accorded there. He himself promoted Co-operation and wrote upon it with that practical clearness by which he was distinguished. As a journalist he aided whoever assisted by thought and art the improvement of social life. From sentiments of public admiration, not less than from the regard inspired by his personal friendship, I inscribed to him my "History of Co-operation in Halifax." While schemes of social life have originated with philosophers and theorists, Co-operation has been generated by the pressure of competition in over-populated cities.

As to moral scepticism in America, there is no more of it than there is in England, while there are certainly more people in America than in England who sacrifice time, money, and, what is more, personal repute, to try and carry out social schemes of life which can never benefit themselves.

America owes its chief co-operative inspiration to English Socialist emigrants. Its communities have been mainly originated by European world-makers. The late Mr. Bellamy Hoare, of New York, possessed the most authentic informa-

tion as to the earliest efforts to establish Co-operation there. But the narratives he is said to have left have not yet been obtained.

A former member of the Socialist Branch 16, Hall of Science, London, Mr. B. J. Timms, was concerned in the affairs of the Sylvania Phalanx and the Co-operative Bakery of the City of New York, which are deemed the original societies of this kind there. The date of their operations cannot be at present determined, as Mr. Timms so little foresaw that any persons might one day be curious about them, that he sold as waste-paper the printed and manuscript documents relating to them. These projects were succeeded by what was known as the organisation of Morrisania, devised to purchase land for a village. The few actual Socialists in the society could not induce the majority to unite further than in buying the land collectively ; so that the only co-operative feature in the scheme was the joint effort to obtain land without loss by the competition of each making a separate purchase, and every one searching the original title. Mr. Timms reports that subsequently they attempted to apply the principle of Co-operation to colonise public lands, but after spending 5,000 dollars of other people's money, that scheme failed. These facts show how in America (as used to be the case in England) the one story of Co-operation is that it is always failing. Still the efforts go on, as though there were some industrial destiny in Co-operation. So long as many who have failed live, very few workers around them have the courage to approach the question ; but no sooner do those who have failed die, or the memory of their disaster fades, than fresh pioneers resume the old work—and succeed. In other cases the fresh adventurers are fortunate enough to meet with some old and brave campaigners who, though they lost their money, never lost their faith, and who never cease to proclaim that others may win though they were beaten. In America many were willing to see it run, but few ran with it. Co-operative correspondence from other countries shows that the co-operator abroad is much like the Irishman—a very different person from what he is at home. In Ireland he is sluggish and despondent ; in America he is active and enterprising. In like manner the discouraged co-operator at home stoutly predicts and stoutly promotes co-operative success

abroad, and counts those ignorant who do not understand the principle, and those of an inferior order of mind who do not believe in it.

The Morrisania, the First Co-operative Village, as it was called, is now a large town. Dr. Hollick, writing in New York, says : " Co-operative affairs, as far as I can see, went on this plan : some man of money was elected treasurer. No money was paid *to* him, and as long as he honoured all drafts made *on* him the thing prospered ; but when he discontinued this obliging arrangement the thing ' bust up.' Horace Greeley was treasurer to two or three schemes, and his official duty consisted in paying the expenses."

One of the few co-operative societies of America, English in its vicissitudes, un-English in its mode of working, is one at New Bedford, Fall River. Provisions being high, and other things, as in England, being costly, a few persons who had been connected with co-operative societies in this country, bethought themselves of setting up one there. Certain dressers clubbed their money, bought goods at wholesale prices, and at first divided them at their private houses. Their business soon grew, and they had to open a store. Then the grocers of Fall River—storedealers, as they are called out there—did as we have found them do in England, went in a body to the wholesale traders, telling them that if they supplied the co-operators they, the storedealers, would no longer buy of them. The dressers were consequently rejected as customers, and they went to Providence, a town fourteen miles away, and tried to buy there. The storekeepers at Fall River attempted to terrify the wholesale traders of Providence ; but intimidation in business is not so easy in America as in England. Some of the Providence traders were men of business, and told the storekeepers of Fall River " to go home and mind their own business ; for so far as they were concerned they should sell to whomsoever they pleased." The dressers were customers worth having, and Providence dealers sold to them, and the dressers obtained goods and triumphed. Shortly the spinners, weavers, and other trades joined the dressers, until twenty-one trades were united, having sixty members each, and the co-operative store soon did a business to the amount of 2,500 dollars a month. This evidence of success brought the intimidated Fall River dealers to



their senses, and then they came and offered to supply the co-operators whom they had rejected, and so Co-operation conquered in Fall River. The plan of working the society there, which is not common in English experience, is this: a committee manage its affairs at a cost of 4 per cent. for rent, buying, and selling. On the second Tuesday in each month they receive orders, which are copied out on to a large sheet with printed and descriptive headings. From the 12th to the 13th they receive money which covers all the orders. Then their buyer goes to the wholesale traders (who now raise no objection to his visits); to them he gives his orders, paying cash therewith, and on the four following evenings men appointed for the purpose serve out the purchases to the accredited applicants. The society buys nothing save what is ordered—orders nothing but what is paid for—it keeps no stock—has no bad debts—no paid storekeepers—and having no provisions on hand to keep, a small place is sufficient for its business, and that is open only four or five nights in the month.<sup>1</sup>

From Lombard Ville Stark Co. I learn, on the testimony of one who has been for thirty-five years a communist, that the fortunes of industry are hampered by combinations and monopolist “rings” out there. There seems to be no place where these cobras of competition do not crawl around the resources of the poor.

At the Glasgow Congress (1876) greetings were received from the Grangers of America. Mr. J. W. A. Wright, who represented them, gave me this extract from the published proceedings of those bodies: “That, having examined the plan of the co-operative societies of Great Britain, popularly known as the Rochdale plan, and the history of the humble beginning, the most remarkable success, and present grand proportions of business enterprises begun and conducted under this plan, we heartily recommend it to the careful consideration of our State and Subordinate Granges, and to the members of our order, and advise such action on the part of the executive committee of the several States as may be necessary to the organisation and operation of such co-operative associations within our order.”

<sup>1</sup> Letters to Author, from Peter Sidebotham, Fall River, Massachusetts, formerly of Hyde, and Thomas Stephenson, of Blackburn, England.

It appears that we were once nearer than we ever shall be again to having a history of American communities. We learn from what Mr. Noyes relates, that a Scotch printer and a disciple of Mr. Owen, who had settled in New York, devoted himself between 1840 and 1854 to personally collecting materials for the history of the communities in the United States, social and co-operative, their origin, principles, progress, or decline and causes of failure. Little is known of him save that he was a person of small stature, black hair, sharp eyes, and a good-natured face. In any circular to the societies he signed himself "A. J. Macdonald." He wisely went himself to the sites of the various communities. He collected particulars of sixty-nine associative schemes, and portraits and sketches of founders and places; but unfortunately died of cholera in New York about 1854, before he had time to state in a book the results of his investigations. Mr. Jacobi was another investigator who spent several years visiting the chief communities, but his journeyings also are barren for the purposes of history. Mr. Jacobi knew the state of these establishments in 1858.

Some business-like account of all the known social schemes which the hospitable soil of the United States has received or nurtured, would be curious. Under this impression I took up Mr. Noyes' "History of American Socialisms" with interest, and laid it down without any. Mr. Noyes is an Oneidaite merely, and has no appreciation for forms of social life, except as they approximate to that peculiar creation of connubial novelties known as Oneidaism. It is allowable that he should applaud his own theory, but not that he should disparage every other. Lately there has appeared a new book on "American Communities," by William Alfred Hines. It is Oneidan in tone, but written with great freshness and vigour. It is next to Nordhoff's work in force and interest.

Mrs. Ann Stanley, known to the public as "Ann Lee," proved a most successful community-maker. She was practically the foundress of the Shakers of 1774. Eighteen societies exist at this day (1878). There is a small compendium of Shaker principles, and a Life of Ann Lee, by F. W. Evans, published by Auchampaugh Brothers, of New Lebanon. The brevity of the book is a recommendation, for it is as much as most persons will be able to bear. This body of communists

are the best known and the most frequently referred to, because they have made communism a by-word in the world by fanaticism and eccentricity. Mr. Evans's book is worth consulting, that the Shakers may be judged in the fairest way by their own professions. Ann Stanley, the foundress or chief prophetess of the order, was a Mrs. Abraham Stanley, but her people never called her by her husband's name. She appears to have had strange and disagreeable conversations with her mother on marriage previous to her own. However, her reasons for joining the Shaker Society were creditable to her, as she considered them distinguished for the clearness and swiftness of their testimony against sin—a very great merit if they knew what sin was; and if the Shakers of 1878 retain the characteristic which Mrs. Stanley believed the first Shakers to possess, they would be very useful, could they be diffused over Europe, where people of that quality are very much needed. "Mother Ann," as Mrs. Stanley came to be called, held that it could not be wrong to imitate Jesus the wifeless.

Shaker is an uncomfortable name, and gives most persons the idea of a lean, shivering enthusiast, but their conduct is that of comely, hospitable, warm-hearted persons. One acquainted with them tells me that once he met an Englishman in Alleghany. He was an old man, dejected, broken in spirit, altogether a pitiable and hopeless object. My friend advised him to make his way to a Shaker Society, of which there were then (and may be still) two in the neighbourhood of Cincinnati. He was not much inspired by the recommendation, but his abject condition overcame his scruples. A few years later he was seen on his way to Europe in search of his son, whom he desired to bring to the society in which he had found refuge. On his way he called upon the friend, Robert Aspland Cooper, who had sent him to the Shakers. His object was to leave a well-stocked trunk in Alleghany until his return. He said the society had supplied him with two, and one was more than enough. No longer dispirited or abject, his countenance beamed with happiness and gratitude as he spoke of his Shaker friends, and his hope was to place his son among them, who else probably had no future, save some Poor Law Union in England. Mrs. Stanley appears to have had good reasons for disliking marriage. The community is the bride they are

advised to wed, which receives all the more attention from the members, their affections not being diverted in any human way.

The Rappites, though they have a disturbing name, have certainly proved that even religious and restricted forms of co-operation conduce to economy. Their riches are celebrated by the friends of competition. They have acquired the name of Economites. They began in Pa. in 1803. These were they of whom Robert Owen bought New Harmony town, and 35,000 acres of land in 1824. The term "Economites," which describes their habits, is derived from the town of Economy, which they built eighteen miles below Alleghany. My correspondent, who resides near them, says they are counted as millionaires, being reputed to be worth twenty millions of dollars, or about five millions English money, not much for a community to possess, seeing that individuals of the commercial octopus class often obtain more. But regarded as the surplus wealth of a people who have all enjoyed complete prosperity—among whom no one has been a pauper, no one poor, no one having cause of care for the future, it would be difficult to find any nation so wealthy. The Economites have been extensive manufacturers of woollen goods and some silk goods. At present they manufacture nothing. The few death has left of them are past the time for labour, and unless they take in new members their wealth will probably go eventually to the State.

The Icarians under Cabet began their community in 1854. It had 60 members and 1,829 acres of land. The Cabettians were French Socialists. Cabet had no illusions like other social leaders among his countrymen. His ideal was industrial. He sought to improve life by labour and equity. Cabet made marriage obligatory in Icaria.

Disciples of Josiah Warren and Stephen Pearl Andrews have written to me to testify the growth of labour emancipation ideas in America—one proclaims himself a two-meal-a-day convert, which does not of itself point to prosperity. Whether this is an economical persuasion depends of course upon the quantity eaten, and upon this point no data has been forwarded to me. If the limitation of meals arise from pecuniary scarcity, it is to be hoped that Co-operation would supply him with the means of trinitarian repasts. In England, co-operative stores



are favourable to those who eat as often as it is wise, and awards its highest premiums to those members who do not neglect their meals. As a rule, fat reformers are found to be more congenial than lean ones; and they look better at quarterly meetings. The idea that mankind are to be saved by preaching merely appears to be waning in America, and the conviction is growing that criminals are made by bad social institutions, which ought to be superseded.

America has been the experimenting ground of schemes, mostly of European origin. It is only overcrowded cities, where competition is nearly used up, or has nearly used up the mass of the people, that new schemes of social life are desired or devised. Though caricatured by celibacy and defaced by religious and sexual eccentricities, American communities show what wealth, morality, and comfort can be had in them. The day will come when men of good sense will add intelligence and art to the material philosophy of Co-operation, and attain results that the people of many a careworn town will gladly seek. Mr. Nordhoff, a Russian writer on American communities, relates that many of them obtain a higher price in the markets for their commodities than other firms, because their commodities can be trusted. Whether seeds of the ground or work of the loom, they are known to be honest and good products. They are the only dealers in America who have known how to make honesty pay. Some say they are the only tradesmen who have attempted it. Utopianism makes money—a thing not believed in in England. Dr. B. W. Richardson has shown in his plan of a Healthy Town, that if capital should take to moral ways, and put itself to scientific uses, communities can be self-supporting, and made to pay in Great Britain, without going to America to try them. The career of the Amanes or Ebenezers shows abundantly that the crotcheteers of communism beat the “practical” co-operators of this country.

The “Ebenezers” are a colony of religious Socialists, who consider themselves under the guidance of an invisible spirit, who, however, seems to possess good business ability. Marriage is regulated by its consent; but the spirit is prudent, and is like Malthus in favour of deferred unions. This settlement is of German origin, and numbered 600 when they arrived in Buffalo from Hesse Darmstadt in 1842. They date their origin



two hundred years back. It would be curious to know what they did, and why they did it, and how they succeeded during the two hundred years of their German career. Their success could never have been what it has been in America, else we should have heard of them in Europe. Their social scheme must be as old as that of Bellers, yet no social reformers of this century have been aware of it. Their distinction, if they had any, at home would have been a fine illustration of the practicability of social theories. They must have realised what we are told is "contrary to human nature," according to those who are "set in authority over us," or who have put themselves over us—for our good. These "Ebenezers," a somewhat nasal name, call themselves in lucid intervals by the prettier term of "Amanes." When they went to the United States they settled upon an old Indian reservation of 6,000 acres, near Buffalo, New York. They found it too small for their numbers. About 1857 they moved west. They have now 30,000 acres at Amana, on the banks of the Iowa River, about seventy miles from the Mississippi — woodland and prairie pleasantly diversified. They have made progress in agriculture and other industries. The colony numbers about 1,300 (1878). They have everything in the way of property in common, but recognise the accepted form of family life, and each family has a separate house or apartments. Those who join the community contribute their property to the common stock, and, if they become dissatisfied, they receive back just what they put in, without interest or wages. Property, therefore, is no bone of contention, and no one can regard himself restricted when he is free to go where he pleases. The objects of the Amanes society are religious association, industrial and domestic co-operation, and the special advancement of the useful arts. The members dress plainly, live plainly, build plainly, but substantially. They have extensive vineyards, make and drink wine and lager beer, but drunkenness is unknown among them. They appear to have no talent for vices, commit no crimes, and have no use for courts. There is, however, a Committee of Arbitration, to settle differences when they arise. The government is administered and the whole business of the community is supervised by a board of thirteen trustees, who are elected by the votes of all the adult population, and hold

the common property. Each department of industry has its manager, who is responsible to the board of trustees, by whom he is appointed. This is what they have done in sixteen years: They found wild lands, and bridged the rivers, made good roads, planted hedges of white willow, cut a canal nearly nine miles in length to supply their needed water power, erected flourishing mills, woollen factories, machine shops, starch, sugar, and vinegar manufactories, all fitted out with fine machinery made by their own machinists. They have built five villages on the tract, and two of them are stations for the Rock Island and Pacific Railroad, which come to their doors. They have good school-houses, plain churches, and two grain elevators at the railroad stations, and buildings each of a capacity for storing 80,000 bushels of grain. The children are kept at school until they are fourteen, and then they are taught a trade or agriculture, and their education is continued in night-schools. English is taught, but German is the medium of communication in business and social life. Their religious services are simple, consisting principally of reading the Scriptures, prayer, and singing, and they have some good voices, no "School Board difficulty," and no Mr. Forster. The women assist in light outdoor work, especially in the vineyards. Early marriages are discouraged, and men are not considered of suitable age for wedlock until they attain the maturity of thirty-five years. There is a great deal of intelligence in this community, but no brilliancy. They have no "population question," no impecuniosity, no misery such as develops such fine virtues among us, and no calamities, from which English moralists deduce the salutary lessons of responsibility. Having no ecclesiastical expounders to teach them the grounds of duty, they are reduced to the necessity of doing right by good sense, and have hitherto achieved no higher distinction than that of having attained to a state of reasonable enjoyment and tame happiness, deprived of the civilised excitement of crimes; and their monotonous security is not even variegated by murder. They affront the philosophical connoisseurs of pleasure by being satisfied with satisfaction, and contented with content.

In 1844 there appeared in America the *Social Pioneer*, representing the New England Social Reform Society. Mr. J. P.

Mendum, of Boston, was the publisher, and Mr. Horace Seaver was the corresponding secretary—the same two gentlemen honourably known as editors of the *Boston Investigator*. In that year (1844) a Conference was held in Phillip's Hall, Boston, with a view of promoting social re-organisation. This Conference represented the pioneer community of Skaneateles, New York. One of the persons present was Dr. Charles Knowlton, of Ashfield, Mass., the gentleman whose name has frequently appeared in this country. The most frequent and eloquent speaker at the Convention was Mrs. Ernestine Rose, a Polish lady well known here. Mention is made then of her delicate health, which “prevented her speaking with her wonted effect.” It is pleasant to report that more than thirty years later she was still a speaker of remarkable power. Origen Bachelier, of Rhode Island, famous as the opponent of Robert Dale Owen in the best-expressed discussions of modern times, appeared as an opponent in this Conference. Another adversary appeared who refused to give his name, except that he was a disciple of Christ. The chairman (Captain Taylor) accordingly announced that “the disciple of Christ had the floor.” The resolutions submitted to the Conference amounted altogether to the amazing number of nearly fifty. It would be wonderful, therefore, if they did not contain some expressions to which some one could object, but they were remarkably wise, temperate, moral, secular, and social in their purport. They mark the progress of popular opinion. Christians in America and England would be found now generally claiming to agree with the spirit of them. Just as our co-operative colony at Queenwood was disappearing, the most comprehensive Conference ever held in favour of new forms of social life was held in America.

Mr. A. J. Macdonald, before mentioned, arrived at New Harmony in 1842, fifteen years after Owen's time ; he resided there two years as a bookbinder. He says after Owen's departure the majority of the population removed, and that the remainder returned to Individualism, and settled as farmers and mechanics in the ordinary way. In the preface to his unpublished work, written shortly before his death, in 1854, Macdonald says he “imagined mankind to be better than they are, and was sanguine that communism would

speedily produce brilliant results, but that years of experience in mingling with the world have shown him the 'stern reality,' and he hopes that his work will help to awaken dreamers." The fact is Macdonald was one of those capricious enthusiasts who were hopeful when social schemes were inchoate and doubtful, and distrustful and despairing when they were really succeeding around him. He was a Scotch emigrant, who began by having too much fervour for Socialism, and ended, like most persons of that class, with having too little. He was, however, a man of original ways; he was a sort of Old Mortality of Co-operation, who visited the graveyards of communities in America, deciphering the epitaphs of sixty-nine defunct phalanxes. Living by his trade, he obtained work in the neighbourhood of a communistic settlement, and spent some time in learning the particulars of its history. He wrote his account of it, and died leaving them in confusion. Mr. Noyes, into whose hands they fell, has not printed them. They deserve publication, as they must contain curious facts unknown to any other author. Mr. Noyes, who has a very mean opinion of social life, save the semi-spiritual and semi-sexual one of the Oneida pattern, is not a trustworthy reporter of Macdonald's MS. The account given me by my correspondent of New Harmony Society is probably true. Every place in which schemes of undisciplined enthusiasm have been put in operation, always prove reactionary in later years. The residents are ashamed of the failure associated with their place, and in their endeavours to repudiate it deny the existence of any liberalising influences left behind, or find some other paternity for them. All the persons I have known who have lived to repudiate their early Socialistic faith—have always remained more liberal and enlightened than they would have been had they never held it. It is singular how men of eminent experience take a partial view of the qualities of a nation, because it falls short of their ideal in a particular respect in which they look for perfection. We know from Madison's Report "of the Convention that framed the famous Constitution of America," that Washington said that "he believed *all* the virtues had left the land." Since, however, modern Americans put down slavery in it, at such a cost of blood and treasure, let us hope that some of the virtues have come back. Had

slavery existed in England for as long a time and to as great a proportional extent, it would have found abler advocates among us than it found in America, and have cost a fiercer struggle to extinguish it. The population of New Harmony in the year 1877 was but about 1,000. It had neither market nor railroad, though they were expected. The place is not what Americans call a "flourishing village." Tradesmen in it fear that the railroad (the great bringer of business) may injure them, which shows that England is not the only place where antiquated notions can nestle.

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Since this chapter was written an unforeseen co-operative settlement has been founded near St. Louis, Mo., by N. O. Nelson, who has the practical genius of Cabet, but who has achieved more than Cabet's success.



## CHAPTER XXXII

## CO-OPERATIVE FARMING

"Parson do preach, and tell we to pray,  
And to think of our work, and not ask more pay :  
And to follow ploughshare, and never think  
Of crazy cottage and ditch-stuff's stink,

And a' bids me pay my way like a man,  
Whethar I can't, or whether I can :  
And, as I han't beef, to be thankful for bread,  
And bless the Lord it ain't turmuts instead :

I'm to call all I gits 'the chastening rod,'  
And look up to my betters, and then thank God."

*Punch.*

SEEING that social schemes of life are as old as Society, and that the first form was that of communism, which meant co-operative uses of the land, it is singular that the first idea should be the last in realisation.

A much-needed employment of Co-operation is in agriculture. The most important application of it occurred in the restless land of potatoes and whiteboys. Amid the bogs of Ralahine an experiment of co-operative agriculture produced great results. The story of its singular success has been given in the chapter on "Lost Communities."

Mr. James B. Bernard, who dated from King's College, Cambridge, wrote in the *New Moral World* November 29, 1834, in favour of a scheme of raising the status of the agricultural labourer as well as the mechanic. A committee of twenty-two members of Parliament published a small 2d. monthly paper at 11, Waterloo Place, Pall Mall, in promotion of this object. Mr. E. S. Cayley, M.P. for the North Riding of Yorkshire, was chairman of this

early project. Mr. Bernard was a Fellow of Cambridge. It was not often that the *New Moral World* had so respectable a contributor. We are apt to think when we hear of a baronet or a lord contemplating setting apart 300 acres of land for the purposes of co-operative farms, that the agricultural millennium is arriving by an express train; but we may read in the *Morning Herald* of 1830 that a peer had several years before set off 500 lots of land, consisting of about five acres each, for a similar purpose.

The testimony of Lord Brougham as to what might be accomplished by uniting agricultural and other industries with instruction and culture, was very explicit. Mr. Fellenberg, of Hofwyl, in Switzerland, made a famous attempt to prove this. In the beginning of the eighteenth century Mr. Fellenberg's agricultural college was the talk of Europe. Robert Owen sent his sons to it, and Lord, then Mr., Brougham went to see it. He declared that the habits of common labour are perfectly reconcilable with those of a contemplative and even scientific life, and that a keen relish for the pleasures of speculation may be united with the most ordinary pursuits of the poor. "All this," he said, "seems to be proved by the experiment of Mr. Fellenberg. His farm is under 220 acres; his income, independent of the profit he derives from breeding horses (in which he is very skilful), and his manufacture of husbandry implements, does not exceed £500 a year. . . . The extraordinary economy," he observed, "is requisite to explain the matter: for although the academy and institute are supported by the richer pupils, these pay a very moderate sum; and the family, who are wholly supported and lodged at Hofwyl, amounts to 180 persons. These dine at six different tables, and their food though simple is extremely good." When Mr. Brougham was there he found seven or eight German princes among the pupils, besides several sons of German nobles, and the Prince and Princess of Wurtemberg were expected to visit the place to arrange for placing another young prince there. There never has been a doubt among men of observation that the agricultural life of England is the dullest and most ignominious known, as far as the labourers in southern and western counties are concerned. Mr. Mill has applauded the

métayer system of other countries as including co-operative usages attended with many advantages. The cultivator is a métayer.

In former days any relation between labourers and farmers, in which the labourers did all the work and the farmer did not take everything, was called "co-operative" farming, Mr. John Gurdon's paternal arrangements of this kind with certain labourers at Assington, was thought much of. In 1862 the *Times* sent a commissioner to Rochdale to report upon co-operative proceedings there. In consequence of what the editor said upon the subject Mr. Gurdon wrote to the *Times*, giving his own account of what he had done, saying: "About thirty years ago, upon a small farm in Suffolk becoming vacant, I called together twenty labourers and offered to lend them capital without interest if they would undertake to farm it, *subject to my rules* and regulations. They gladly availed themselves of my offer. In the course of ten years they paid me back my capital, so that I was induced to let another farm of 150 acres to thirty men upon the same terms. These have also nearly paid me back the capital lent to them, and instead of eating dry bread, as I regret to say many of the agricultural labourers are now doing, each man has his bacon, and numberless comforts which he never possessed before; thus the rates are reduced, as these fifty families are no longer burdensome. The farmers are sure to meet with honest men, as conviction of crime would debar them of their share, and the men themselves have become much more intelligent and present happy, cheerful countenances. If every country gentleman would follow my example, distress among the agricultural poor would not be known. I merely add I have no land so well farmed." At the same time the Rev. Banks Robinson, vicar of Little Wallingfield, Suffolk, living near Mr. Gurdon's place, wrote to the *Co-operator* to say he had visited Assington and thought highly of Mr. Gurdon's friendliness to the labourers and the kind intention of his plans, but they were not co-operative as the word was understood in Rochdale. Ten years later my colleague, Mr. E. R. Edger, visited Mr. Crisell, the manager of the farm whom the Rev. Mr. Robinson had found to be of "manly, open, and ingenious

appearance," beyond what he expected of one belonging to the "depressed" class. Mr. Edger sent me this report :—

"I paid a visit to Assington, and had a conversation with the manager, Mr. Crisell (pronounced with i long, 'Cry-sell'). I can feel no enthusiasm at all about the Assington Farm. There seems no 'co-operation' in the right sense of the term, but only *bounty* of the squire towards poor neighbours.

"(1) It is limited to inhabitants of the parish.

"(2) Each member can hold only *one* share.

"(3) Members have no voice in the management.

"(4) Wages to workmen same as usual.

"(5) No special inducement offered to the workmen to become shareholders. The manager remarked that they did not care particularly to employ the members; this seems to me very significant.

"It has been in existence forty-one years, so it will take a long time to renovate society that way. Remember, I only give my *impressions*."

Still they are the "impressions" any one has who looks at the matter from a co-operative point of view. Mr. Gurdon's merit was that he did something for labourers around him when few squires did anything; and his isolated example has served to call the attention of others to what may be done without loss by squires of ordinary good intentions. That what Mr. Gurdon did in this way should be the only notable effort of his class during forty years in England, is the most melancholy measure of the tardiness of thought for the agricultural labourer's improvement the reader will find anywhere.

What an honourable stride from Assington is that made by Lord George Manners at Ditton Lodge Farm, near Newmarket! Writing to the *Agricultural Gazette*, in 1873, his lordship states :—

"At my harvest supper in August, 1871, I informed my labourers that, commencing from Michaelmas, 1872, I should take them into a qualified partnership, paying them their ordinary wages, but dividing between capital and labour any surplus above the sum required to pay 10 per cent. (5 per cent. as interest, and 5 per cent. as profit) on the capital invested in the business: or, in other words, that I should

take half such surplus, and divide the other half among those who had laboured on the farm the whole of the preceding twelve months. I have recently made up accounts for the twelve months ending Michaelmas, 1873, and I have a surplus, after paying capital 10 per cent., of £71 16s. 6d. ; there will, therefore, be a sum of £36 18s. 3d. for division among the labourers, which will give each man a sum of £3. Many will shake their heads and say, ‘All very well ; but if the next is a bad year, you will have to bear the whole loss.’ My answer is, ‘Quite true ; *but who can say that my loss may not be less than it would otherwise have been, owing to the stimulus which this system can scarcely fail to exert on the labourer in his daily work ?*’

The answer here italicised denotes greater knowledge of Co-operation than many co-operators show. Mr. William Lawson, of Blennerhasset Farm, had a famous stallion which he named “Co-operation.” Some Newmarket breeder would find “Industrial Partnership” a good name for the favourite at the Derby.

Lord Hampton, when Sir John Pakington, spoke in 1872 with great liberality upon the same subject. He said “he supported the idea of co-operative farms and an extension of the system of co-operative stores into every village of the kingdom. As to the question of compensation for unexhausted improvements, he considered that such compensation was only simple justice. In the lease there should be covenants to protect the landlord in the concluding years of the term, and there should be equal justice to the tenant for unexhausted improvements.”

Mr. Walter Morrison has afforded the means for farm hands conducting a real co-operative farm at Brampton Bryan, in Herefordshire. As a rule few landowners think seriously of the advantages of this form of industry, and labourers have fewer facilities of learning how to conduct farms than artisans have of learning how to conduct manufactories, so that co-operative farming will make slower progress than co-operative workshops. For a farm to succeed in the hands of labourers requires the presence and guidance of a good farmer, until they acquire the habits of management. The Assington labourers would not have made much of the facilities Mr.



Gurdon kindly provided, had he not been near to countenance and control the results.

The most remarkable of all the experiments of agricultural co-operation is that recorded by Mr. William Lawson (a brother of Sir Wilfrid Lawson, M.P.) in his "Ten Years of Gentleman Farming." Mr. Lawson spent more than £30,000 in this way. Though this large sum was spent it could hardly be said to be lost, since at any point of his many experiments he might have made money had he been so minded. But he proceeded on the plan of a man who built one-storey houses, and as soon as he found that they let at a paying rent, pulled them down and built two-storey houses to see if they would pay, and when he found that they answered, he demolished them, and put up houses of three storeys, and no sooner were they profitably occupied, than he turned out the inhabitants and pulled them down. What he lost was by the rapidity of his changes, rather than by the failure of his plans, for he had sagacity as great as the generosity of his intentions. His chief farm was at Blennerhasset, in Cumberland. He was the first to introduce the steam plough into the country, and every form of scientific farming matured between 1860 and 1870. He maintained for the use of his neighbours, two travelling steam engines, which he named Cain and Abel. He founded co-operative stores, supplying the capital himself, which ill-judged paternalism destroyed self-helping effort in the members. At Blennerhasset he founded a People's Parliament, where all those employed upon the various farms and all the villagers, periodically assembled and discussed the management of the co-operative farms and the qualities and characters of the managers. This was a dangerous feature borrowed from Oneida. The result to the farm was great variety of counsel, and some of the drollest debates and votes ever recorded. The effect upon the people was, however, very good. Mr. Lawson's plan of inviting miscellaneous criticism is not so silly as it looks. If you do not feel bound to take all the advice you get, and are strong enough not to be confused by contradictory opinions, there is no more economical way known of getting wisdom. Even disagreeable people have their value in this way. There must be

education of some kind, at least of neighbourly feeling, for it is easy to promote the welfare of those you like, but how about the people you do not like? When quarrelsome people come into such a society they begin to discuss, not the merits of the society, but each other. It is a difficult thing for people to act together—neither people devoted to politics nor people devoted to religion can do it without training. Some years after the farms were sold, I found more intelligence and ready sense among the villagers than I ever met with elsewhere. On a plot of land at Aspatria, bearing the name of Noble, Mr. Lawson built Noble Temple, a public hall, always available for lectures. He also established medical dispensaries, schools, and news-rooms. No agricultural population was ever so liberally or generously cared for in England. Mr. Lawson's "Ten Years of Gentleman Farming" is the most interesting and amusing book in co-operative literature. Never was landowner more sagacious, inventive, genial, liberal or changeable—not in his generous purpose but in his methods. Had he been less paternal and taught his people the art of self-help, he had been a great benefactor.

The rise of the Agricultural Labourers' Union had the effect of promoting Distributive Co-operation. Many labourers never heard of Co-operation, or did not think much of it, though acquainted with it. The general impression was that it might do very well for mechanics in towns. This kind of impression is not peculiar to agricultural labourers. Most people consider new improvement may suit somebody else. The comfortable sense of self-perfection, with which many persons are endowed, leads to a complacent judgment we so well know. One of the co-operative stores recently set up by the members of the Agricultural Union numbered sixty persons. Their business and profits being in considerable confusion, Mr. John Butcher was asked to look into their affairs. He saw at once that they needed an intelligent secretary. "Have you no carpenter among you," was his first inquiry, "one with a little skill in figures, who could keep your books?" The answer was, "We have no such person." "Surely," Mr. Butcher observed, "you do not mean to say that there is no carpenter in the village?" "Oh

yes," was the answer—"we have several, but they are not members of the Union." "You do not mean to say that you require every member of the store to be a member of the Union?" The unhesitating reply was, "Oh, but we do. The doctor and the parson would have joined our store, to have encouraged us to improve our position, but we would not have them because they were not members of the Union." And it turned out that the lawyer would have joined the store, but did not see his way to becoming a member of the Union. It transpired that a noble earl, having property in the neighbourhood, and a seat hard by, would have joined the store, from an honourable feeling of encouraging the poor men in efforts of social self-help, but he was refused because he had not qualified himself by entering his name as a member of the Agricultural Labourers' Union. Mr. Butcher explained to the exacting labourers that Co-operation took no account of politics, religion, or social station, and regarded members only as they subscribed capital and purchased goods. Thus, some of these stipulating Unionists, whom exclusiveness treated as a caste, and whom isolation kept poor, came to see that it ill became them to imitate the narrowness which degraded them, and the jealousy which impoverished them.

In 1867 the Society of Agricultural Co-operation named previously was formed under the title of the Agricultural and Horticultural Association, Limited. The following table shows its progress from 1868 to 1877 :—

Date.	Members.	Share Capital.	Deposit Capital.	Sales.	Net Gain to Members.
		£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1868	174	1,066	—	10,342 0 5	493 2 3
1869	235	3,584	—	19,102 4 3	433 6 5
1870	315	4,256	—	21,521 2 8	1,151 6 4
1871	430	5,275	—	29,351 0 11	1,127 18 11
1872	578	9,045	1,165 18 0	47,490 2 5	2,083 9 8
1873	783	12,153	3,958 4 8	56,336 15 2	2,585 5 9
1874	892	13,542	7,793 6 8	64,676 15 8	2,914 1 11
1875	978	15,352	6,515 18 2	64,428 2 3	1,741 9 0
1876	1,041	15,955	17,360 9 8	66,405 1 0	—
1877	1,113	16,495	14,279 15 8	89,334 4 11	3,120 16 8

Some of the Northern stores possess farm property, but agricultural Co-operation has not made distinctive way. Landowners, friendly to self-help among the people, are now disposed to encourage these attempts. Mr. Arthur Trevelyan, of Tyneholm, always foremost where social improvement can be promoted, offered the Wolfstar and Wester Pencaitland farms for co-operative purposes. It is quite worth the while of squires to efface the feeling Bloomfield described among the agricultural poor of his day, who were—

“Left distanced in the maddening race  
Where'er Refinement showed its hated face.”

## CHAPTER XXXIII

## ECCENTRIC AND SINGULAR SOCIETIES

"An obstacle to the co-operation of working men is the difficulty of getting good, sufficient, and trustworthy instruments for giving it effect; but wherever that can be done, I commend it without limit. I cannot say what I think of the value of it. I hope it will extend to other things which it has scarcely yet touched. I hope it will extend to all the amusements and recreations of the working men. It fosters a strong sentiment of self-respect among working men."—THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE at Hawarden, *Speech to Leigh and Tyldesley Liberal Clubs, September, 1877.*

No rapidity of narration, no compression of sentences, consistent with explicitness, can bring into a small compass all the incidents and all the societies which deservedly challenge notice. There is no choice save that of noticing the salient features only of those societies which stand as it were upon the highway of Co-operation. There are always incidents, amusing or tragical, in beginnings by small means where success came by the economy of combination.

The societies which reported themselves in 1877 to the Registrar of Friendly Societies, and those which did not (and are not given in detail), numbered upwards of a thousand. The reader must therefore imagine for himself the prolonged panorama on which these thousand stores might be depicted, as interesting in their way as the Thousand and One Arabian Nights.

Professor Masson tells us that Herodotus mentions 100, Aristotle 120 forms of diverse life: communal in some sort, all succeeding in their day. In hundreds of places in Great Britain where Co-operation has arisen again and again and had its stores and workshops, no tradition remains that such stores existed among their forefathers long ago. Most of the



stores mentioned in the following list are deadlier than the Dead Cities of the Zuyder Zee, for not a trace of them remains. But happily live co-operative cities stand on their ruins.

The six earliest societies in England on the co-operative plan were the following :—

Birmingham (Tailor's Shop), 1777.  
 Mongewell Oxfordshire (Store), 1794.  
 Hull (Corn Mill), 1795.  
 Woolwich (Store), 1806.  
 Davenport (Store), 1815.  
 New Lanark (Store), 1816.  
 London Economical Society (Printers), 1821.

#### MANCHESTER AND SALFORD SOCIETIES,

EXISTING IN 1829 AND 1830.

FIRST CHARLTON ROW, Evan Street, Charlton Row, established May 3, 1829—18 members—weekly subscriptions 1s. 1d.—capital £100—weekly dealings £20—principle to divide at four years' end.

ECONOMICAL, Frederick Street, Salford, established August 22, 1829—30 members—weekly subscription 3d.—capital £57—weekly dealings £25—principle, division.

TEMPERANCE, 15, Oldfield Road Salford, established October 26, 1829—40 members—weekly subscription 3d.—capital £42—weekly dealings £14—principle, non-division.<sup>1</sup>

INDEPENDENT HOPE, Hope Street, Salford, established February 26, 1830—45 members—weekly subscription 3d.—capital £70—weekly dealings £60—principle, non-division.

PERSEVERANCE, 13, Shepley Street, London Road, Manchester, established April 12, 1830—56 members—weekly subscription 4d.—capital £24 weekly dealings £11—principle, non-division.

AMICABLE, Ormond Street, Charlton Row, established May 1, 1830—24 members—weekly subscription 4d.—capital £10—weekly dealings £7—principle, non-division.

FRIENDLY, Bentley's Court, Miles Platting, established April 10, 1830—27 members—weekly subscription 4d.—capital £18—weekly dealings £6—principle, non-division.

BENEVOLENT, Sandford Street, Ancoats, established April 22, 1830—124 members—weekly subscription 4d.—capital £45—weekly dealings £46—library 50 books—principle, non-division.

GOOD INTENT, Hope Town, Salford, established May 8, 1830—48 members—weekly subscription 3d.—capital £10—weekly dealings £7—principle, non-division.

FORTITUDE, Long Millgate, established June 1, 1830—15 members—weekly subscription 3d.—capital £2—weekly dealings £1—principle, non-division.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This means that profits were being accumulated for the purpose chiefly of reconstituting the world. Co-operators worked on that scale in those days.

<sup>2</sup> The lofty buildings of the Co-operative Union stands in Millgate now, preserving its co-operative prestige.

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The following is a list of the Societies existing in London and around of which mention is made in co-operative publications of 1830-3. A few of later date are included from subsequent periodicals :—

## LONDON SOCIETIES.

SOCIETIES' NAMES.	PLACE OF MEETING.	STOREKEEPER.
First London ...	19, Greville Street, Hatton Garden	W. Lovett.
Second London ...	6, Little Windmill St., Golden Sq....	W. Watkins.
First West London ...	33, Queen Street, Bryanstone Square	W. Freeman.
New London ...	17, Plumber Street, Old Street Road.	—
London Branch A1 ...	... ..	C. Gold.
First Soho ...	27, Denmark Street, St. Giles ...	J. Elliot.
Lambeth and Southwark	3, Webber Street, Waterloo Road ...	J. Booth.
First Westminster ...	37, Marsham Street, Vincent Square	— Jarrold.
First Pimlico ...	8, Ranelagh Street ... ..	—
First St. James' ...	5, Rose Street, Crown Court, Soho...	—
Pimlico ...	... ..	—
First Finsbury ...	69, Old Street Road ... ..	Committee.
Somers Town ...	22, Great Clarendon Street... ..	—
Islington ...	"White Horse," Back Road ... ..	—
Islington Methodists ...	6, High Street, Islington Green ...	—
Hampstead ...	"Duke of Hamilton" ... ..	Not trading.
Pentonville ...	Chapel Street ... ..	—
First Bethnal Green ...	9, South Conduit Street ... ..	J. Bredell.
Second " ...	17, West Street, North Street ...	—
Third " ...	"Norfolk Arms" ... ..	—
Fourth " ...	Wilmot Grove ... ..	—
Fifth " ...	School, Sydney Street, Twigg's Folly	R. Oliver.
Sixth " ...	10, Thomas Street, Buck Lane ...	T. Riley.
Seventh " ...	"Well and Bucket," Church Street	—
Middlesex ...	22, St. Ann's Court, Wardour Street	— Basset.
" Second ...	8, Berwick Street, Soho ... ..	Not trading.
First Southwark ...	"Gun," Joiner St., Westminster Rd.	—
Southwark ...	"Black Bull," Bull Crt., Tooley St.	—
Cooper's, Ratcliff ...	75, Heath Street, Commercial Road	S. Sennitt.
North London... ..	"Duke of Clarence," Pancras Road	—
Second West London ...	{ 11, Duke Street, Lincoln's Inn Flds. "The King's Head," Swinton St., Gray's Inn Road ... ..	—
Hand in Hand... ..	"The Crown," Red Cross Street ...	—
First Hoxton ...	"The Bacchus," Old Hoxton ... ..	—
Kingsland ...	... ..	—
Bow ...	... ..	—
Whitechapel ...	... ..	—
First Stepney ...	... ..	—
First Bloomsbury ...	"Bull and Mouth," Hart Street ...	—
Metropolitan ...	Eagle Coffee House, Farringdon St.	Committee.
First Kennington ...	The Union, Vassal Road ... ..	—
First Chelsea ...	36, Regent Street, Chelsea Common	Committee.
Knightsbridge ...	... ..	—
Kensington ...	Birch's School Room ... ..	—
United Christians ...	74, Leonard Street, Shoreditch ...	G. Richardson.
Methodists ...	Newel, Baker, Wardour Street, Soho	—
St. George, Hanover Sq.	"Portsmouth Arms," Shepherd St.	Not trading.

"None of these societies," it was stated, "are at present manufacturing, but the Owenian expects to begin shortly. With the exception of the Benevolent they are not yet provided with libraries." They had the sense in those days to make apologetic confession of the absence of means of acquiring knowledge.

The following societies are placed alphabetically for convenience of reference. The year of their formation is given where it has been traced. Those without dates mostly existed between 1830 and 1833 :—

A		Bromsgrove	1832	G	
Allerton	1829	Bungay	"	Glasgow	1829
Almondbury	"	C	"	Godalming	1830
Aberdeen	"		1829	Greenock	1838
Ardsey	1831	Canterbury	"	Garstang	"
Armitage Bridge	1830	Congleton	"	H	
Armagh	"	Chatham	"		
Ayr	1838	Clitheroe	"	Halifax	1829
Ashton	"	Clayton	"	Hastings	"
Ackworth	1834	Coventry	"	Horton	"
Anstey	1828	Cambridge	"	Highroyd	"
Accrington		Cumberworth	1829—	Huddersfield	1829—1832
Ashby-de-la Zouch			1832	Hothorne	1829
B		Cheltenham	1830	Holmfirth	1832
		Carlisle	"	Hulme	1831
Birmingham Tay-		Clayton Heights	1833	Holbeck	1830
lors Manufactur-		Chester	1830	Holywell	1830
ing Society	1777	Chorley		Holdsworth	1832
" Store	1828	Cockermouth		Horton Bank Top	1833
Broadbottom	1831	Colne		Horbury	1830
Belper	1829	Chowbent		Hyde	
Barnstaple	"	Cromford		Hereford	
Brighton	1826	Cambuslang (Scot-	1829	I	
Blackfriars	"	land)			
Bradford	1829	D		Ipswich	1829
Bury	"		1815	Indiana (America <sup>1</sup> )	1826
Barnsley	"	Devonport	1827	J	
Bolton	"	Darlington	"		
Boothfold	1831	Derby	1829	Jersey, New	1826
Birkacre	"	Derby	1833	Jamy Green	1835
Barns	"	Dolphin		Jedburgh	1830
Broadford	"	Dudley		K	
Burslem	1830	Daventry			
Bath	1838	E	1826	Kidderminster	1829
Bristol	"		1833	Keighley	"
Bilston	"	Exeter	1832	Kendal	"
Bridgnorth	"	Eccleshill		Kearsley	1831
Brighlingren	1832	Exhall		Kenilworth	
Bolton-le-Moor	"	F		L	
Blackburn	"		1829		
Burnley	"	Finsbury (see Lon-		Lamberhead Green,	
Banbury	"	don Societies)	1833	Wigan	1830
Burton-on-Trent	"	Foleshill			
		Farnley Tyas			
		Failsworth			

<sup>1</sup> Though this was not an English Store, it was founded by Englishmen.

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London (see List of Metropolitan Societies)	1821	Newcastle		Stourbridge	1830
Leeds	1829	Northampton		Southampton	"
Loughborough,	1829-1832	O		Stratford	"
Lindley	1832	Oldham	1832	Sandbeds	1833
Liverpool	1830-	Oldbury	"	Shibden	1829
Longroyd	"	Outwood	1831	Stafford	
Leicester	1829, "	Oxford	1830	Shrewsbury	
Longford, near		Orbiston (Scotland)	1826	Shiffnall	
Coventry	1832	P		T	
Lower Houses, near		Paris	1821	Thorne	1829
Huddersfield	1834	Preston	1829	Tunbridge Wells	"
Leigh		Prestolee	1830	Thurstanland	1830
Lynn		Pilkington	"	Thames Ditton	"
Leamington		Poole	"	Twickenham	"
Lutterworth		Peniston	1833	Thurmaston	"
Leeks		Padiham	"	Todmorden	"
Lancaster		Penkridge	"	Tarporley	
		Pudsey	"	Tabley (Derbyshire)	
				U	
M		Q		Uley	1829
Manchester (see Manchester and Salford Societies)	1829	Queenshead	1829	Upperley	1830
		R		Unsworth	1832
Macclesfield	"	Rochdale	1830	W	
Morley	"	Ralahine (Ireland)	1831	Worcester	1829
Marylebone	"	Runcorn	1830	Westminster	"
Maidstone	"	Ratcliffe	1832	Worthing	1828
Mansfield	"	Ripponden	1833	Whitehaven	1829
Millsbridge	1830	Rastrick	1829	Wallingford	"
Miles Platting	"	S		Warrington	"
Marseilles <sup>1</sup>		Sheepshead	1829	Woolton	"
Mixenden Lane	1832	Stone	"	Wigan	"
Mixenden Stones	"	Soho	"	Warley (near Hali-fax)	1831
Mixenden Rocks	"	Sheffield	1830	Wasboro' Bridge	1832
Mottram		Salford	1829	Worksworth (Derbyshire)	
Malpas		Stockport	1839	Wells	
Mossley		Shipley	1830	Wolverhampton	1832
Melross		Stamford	"	Walsall	"
		Shelley	"	Wellington	"
N		Stockmoor	"	Wellingborough	"
Nottingham	1827	St. Colombo, Corn-wall	1830	Warwick	"
Newark	1831	Syston	"	Wisbech	"
Norwich	1827	St. James	"	Y	
New Mill	1832			Yarmouth	
New Catton	1830			York	1830
Newchurch	1827				

There were 125 Co-operative Associations in England and Scotland in 1829. They were stated to amount to 250 in 1830, to which number they doubtless amounted, as they were often estimated by competent authorities in those days at 300.<sup>2</sup> Forty co-operative societies were formed in London, and about

<sup>1</sup> This store was of English inspiration.

<sup>2</sup> In the little work by Messrs. Acland and Jones the number of the societies is somewhat different, but the reason is not stated, and when I asked for it information was refused.

400 in various parts of the country, so far back as 1833; and four of them, all in Yorkshire, still remain (1877).

In Chapter XVI. the reader has seen the account of the Birmingham Co-operative Workshop of 1777, and in Chapter VIII. Bishop Barrington's masterly little history of the first store, known in 1794 as the Village Shop of Mongewell.

The third of the early stores was one established in Hull in 1795. It was not a mere shop, but a society. It was formed by a few persons for the sale of the necessities of life at lower prices than were current among the ordinary retailers. Their transactions were more particularly in wheat and flour. Eventually it became a corn mill purely, and has continued to be known as such.

The Hull Industrial Corn Mill is the oldest in the parliamentary return of 1863, the society there dating 1795. Its members were given at 3,818, 701 having joined during the year 1863, and none withdrawn, and yet its members in the 1862 returns were only given at 1,900. By what error this arose was not explained. Its shares of 1862 were 50s. each; in 1863 they were 25s.; the total amount of which is £4,776, on which it paid 5 per cent. per annum interest. Mr. Nuttall remarked,<sup>1</sup> "Its sale receipts in 1863 were £38,821, and profit £2,947, or nearly 62 per cent. on share capital, and 7½ per cent. on sale receipts, or, as co-operators generally say, about 1s. 6d. per £ for dividend."

If the early books of the Society of the Corn Mill exist, they might show what manner of people began it, what was their inspiration, and what were their early adventures.

In October, 1806, twenty-six of the workmen in the Arsenal at Woolwich determined to resist extortionate demands of the shopkeepers; they each subscribed 10s. 6d., and sent one of themselves to Smithfield, where for £20 they purchased a bullock. It was found that in this manner the price of their meat was reduced exactly one-half—from 9d. to 4½d. per lb. Their effort had been generally ridiculed, but its success could not be denied. They were speedily joined by a large number of other workmen, and were soon able to rent a shed at £20 per annum, where they occasionally had as many as fifteen cattle at a time. It was not long before they

<sup>1</sup> "English Leader." Edited by the Author.



acted upon the same principle in respect to other articles of their consumption. They bought tea by the chest, butter by the load ; plums for their Christmas pudding by wholesale ; they contracted for bread at a reduced price. The movement, while it lasted, was very successful ; but the termination of the war put an end to it. The workmen were thrown out of employment to relapse into the misery from which they had emerged. It is singular that dealing in meat, which has been the difficulty of nearly every co-operative society, and for many years a loss in most, and has had to be abandoned altogether in others, should have been the great success of the Woolwich Society, the first which undertook its sale.

Co-operation, extinguished at Woolwich, reappeared at Devonport in 1815. A shop for the sale of bread was opened in the town ; a corn mill was erected at Toybridge, thirteen miles distant. It still exists under the name of "Union Mill." To the bakery was added a coal association, which shared its prosperity. It is worthy of remark that coal selling, which has often been a difficulty and loss elsewhere, was one of the successes at Devonport.

Mr. Jonathan Wood informed me in 1872 that he was the second storekeeper of the Co-operative Benevolent Fund Association (begun 1827), then at 31, West Street, Brighton. Mr. William Bryan was the first, who left suddenly for America. Why do not persons who emigrate abruptly send remittances ? Since 1829 that departure is remembered. The store took land about nine miles from Brighton, built a house upon it, cultivated a market garden, and sent the produce to the Brighton market. The store had two cows, two horses and carts, and many pigs. Mr. Jonathan Wood says, "They did wonders enough to prove what might have been done had the people been honest enough to do it. Dishonesty of those on the land broke the affair up." This is one of the many examples in which the want of legal protection destroyed early stores. Fifty years later (in 1877) Brighton did not do one-tenth as much in co-operation as it did in 1827.<sup>1</sup> The Brighton Society reported in the *Associate* for May, 1829, that

<sup>1</sup> In 1888 it recommenced with a store—built a bakery in 1902, and has now branches at Hove and Portslade.

“early in 1828 a member of the name of G. H. left us for his native place (Worthing), and there formed a society very similar to our own, except the payment to the common fund. With them it was formed only for profit; and from this has sprung up, as a branch, a society at Findon. The Worthing Co-operative Society soon found reason to regret having begun business in a manner too expensive for its extent. The hire of a shop and salary of a person for his whole time were unnecessary for the first months of their undertaking; besides transferring as much as £70 worth of their goods to the branch at Findon. Though there seemed a fair opening at that village, and some hearty friends to co-operative views came forward, it was a hazardous step for a society so young as that of Worthing.” When I was in Worthing in 1877 I spoke with several members who were quite unaware of the pre-existence of a co-operative society there in 1828.

The *Chester Co-operator* for 1830 took for its motto two long extracts from the *Brighton Co-operator* of 1829. It is one of the many instances I have found of the influence of Sussex co-operation. It is encouragement to advocates to hear of numerous societies which were formed by so small a paper as the *Brighton Co-operator*, issued by Dr. King. It consisted of merely two small leaves published monthly. A single number of the *Co-operative News* contains as much matter as the yearly volume of the *Co-operator* did.

According to the account given by Dr. King to Lord Brougham, the Brighton Co-operative Society of 1828 was quite a curiosity in its way. Its funds were raised by penny subscriptions. It had 170 members, who ultimately accumulated £5, with which they commenced their store, and their first week's sales amounted to half-a-crown! The administration of the affairs of this society must have been simpler than that of Mongewell. Total receipts of half-a-crown a week could not have been perplexing to the most bewildered store-keeper. The early Rochdale Pioneers, with £28 of capital, were wealthy tradesmen compared with those of Brighton.

A Brighton Co-operative Benevolent Fund Association was formed in April, 1827, which spread a knowledge of the principles of Co-operation, and sent industrious families, not having the means of journeying, to any co-operative under-

taking where they might be required. The original Brighton society changed its objects three times, and varied its regulations accordingly. The south coast co-operators, nevertheless, did much for Co-operation in their day.

Darlington furnishes an early instance of a store coming out of a strike. This was in 1827. The wool-combers and stuff weavers of Bradford struck in that year for higher wages, and the wool-combers and linen weavers of Darlington participated in the movement. At the conclusion of the strike the combers and wool-sorters of Darlington started a co-operative grocery. The president of the trade society of Darlington, out of which the store originated, was John Brownless, a linen weaver, and it had for its secretary George Elwin, a shoemaker. The store traded under the name of Topham & Co. After a few years it fell into a few hands, and ultimately became the private affair of John Topham.

Twelve years later, in the turbulent year of the Chartists, 1839, the Socialists and Chartists of Darlington set up another co-operative provision store. The shares were ten shillings each. John Brownless,<sup>1</sup> son of the Mr. Brownless previously named, was one of the directors. This store proposed to give a dividend to shareholders and a share of profits to customers, who were required to have their purchases entered in a book as they made them. One Nicholas Bragg was salesman. Domestic difficulty in his household brought the society into unpopularity, and it broke up by a distribution of salts and senna to each member, being probably the only unsold stock. This is the oddest final dividend that is to be met with in the annals of co-operation. Subsequently, allured, peradventure, by the curious medicinal "bonus" of the last society, the Oddfellows set up a third store in Darlington. With a portion of their funds they started a co-operative grocery under the charge of one John Brason as salesman. This was in 1842. But as it was in the beginning, so it was in the end. Before long the store fell into private ownership.

In London a store was opened in John Street, Tottenham Court Road, for the sale of tea and groceries as early as 1830. This is worth mentioning, as John Street was the most famous

<sup>1</sup> Who emigrated to the Western World in 1842 and settled at Akron Summit Co., Ohio, and from whose letters I gather these facts.

propagandist street in London, next to Charlotte Street. In the same year Mr. Allan Devonport's name appears as offering to prepare a Co-operative Catechism. This was the first proposal to devise that useful instrument of propagandist statement. A man must find out what he means, if he did not know before, if he constructs a successful catechism. Davenport was, when I knew him, well advanced in years, slender in frame, gentle, earnest, and steadfast in advocating views. Temperate, frugal, and industrious, yet he never had sufficient for proper subsistence. He never complained and never ceased to try and improve the condition of his order. He was a writer on agrarianism, which never had a milder advocate.

A stranger hardly knows what to make of Birmingham. It is not teacup-shaped, like Rochdale, nor a cavity like Stockport, nor a ravine like Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Birmingham is neither quite flat nor properly elevated. It is not a plate, nor a dish, nor a tea-tray, nor any compound of plane and rim. It is a disturbed tableland, bounded by woods and blast furnaces. If you could approach it *viâ* Hagley, you might mistake it for Derby; if you reach it through "Dudley Port," you would take it to be Sodom and Gomorrah in the act of undergoing destruction. In 1820-30 the business part of the town was an expanded Whitechapel, variegated by a Bethnal Green—being in this case "Deritend," where the Old Crown House, five hundred years old, still stands sound. Owing to municipal energy and sense Birmingham is growing into a great pleasant, civilised community. It is precisely that kind of town where Co-operation should succeed. There was a reputed co-operative store near the Town Hall, Birmingham, between 1860 and 1870—a mere shop. Its profits were not capitalised—it had no news-room. Its administrators were frigid—the members had no co-operative passion. The store failed from not knowing its own reason of being.<sup>1</sup> In Birmingham co-operative "dead men" lie thick about—and some live men too, for real stores have arisen there since.

As well as a reputed "Co-operative" Farm, Assington, in Suffolk, has a real sort of store. A member of the original Assington Co-operative Society wrote a letter in the *Co-operator* of January 10, 1869, "the first time," he said, "they had

<sup>1</sup> Letter to *Birmingham Gazette*, September, 1877.



attempted to write to a newspaper," which proved them to be the quietest co-operators known.

There was a Manchester society in 1831, which had a store-keeper of the imposing name of William Shelmerdine, who gave a short and instructive account of the formation of the first Manchester co-operative society.<sup>1</sup> As the city of Manchester would appear to be a natural seat of Co-operation, and as the society was well conceived, well devised, and had reasonable and practical ideas of self-expansion, the mystery is not explicable now why it failed to be a leading and distinguished association. It bore the winning name of the "Economical Society," and its rooms were at 7, Rodger's Row, Jackson's Row, Deansgate, Manchester. Mr. Shelmerdine stated that it was founded on the 28th of August, 1830, by eight persons who agreed to form a co-operative trading society and to pay £1 each as a share, and not less than threepence per week. Four of them paid the £1 down, and the other four one shilling each as entrance money. With this £4 4s. they bought sugar, soap, and candles, which they sold to themselves and others. They soon found confidence to add to their stock rice, coffee, and raisins. At the end of the month they found their profits, they said, accumulating fast. They no doubt were astonished to make a profit at all, and thought much of the little they made. With it, however, they at once bought some leather, and employed one of their members to make and mend shoes for them. With new profits they bought stockings, worsted, linen, and flannel, manufactured by other co-operators. They were poor hitherto, they had seen nothing before them but poverty and degradation, and they were delighted at discovering that they could place themselves above the fear of want by working for themselves and among themselves. So they came to the unanimous resolution to begin manufacturing stout goods, fast-coloured ginghams for themselves and other co-operative societies. The Economical Society by this time numbered thirty-six members; amongst them were spinners, warpers, weavers, dyers, joiners, hatters, shoemakers, tin-plateworkers. They had a shop well stocked with provisions, with woollen cloth manufactured by the co-

<sup>1</sup> See *Lancashire and Yorkshire Co-operator*, No. 12, 1832. There was a society in Salford in 1829, as elsewhere recorded.



operators of Huddersfield, linens, checks, and calicoes made by the society at Lamberhead Green, stockings from Leicester, flannel from Rochdale, pins from Warrington. The magnitude of their business, which excited so much hope, would be thought very little of now. At their stock-taking in August, 1831—the date was the 28th—they record that memorable day (a shorter day in the year would have been sufficient for their purpose), when their stock was found of the value of £46 12s. The subscriptions which they had received amounted to only £26 10s. and their profits to £20 2s. They gave as a reason for purchasing their articles at co-operative societies, that they “knew they were made of good material and showed good workmanship, entirely different in character to the light articles commonly made for mere sale, and not for wear and durability.” The members met twice a week at their own meeting-room at the store for discussing their business, and general conversation, thus avoiding public-house diminution of profits, and they looked forward to the day their numbers and means would enable them to establish a school for the instruction of their children, and a library and reading-room for the improvement of their members. This early store, therefore, combined all the good features of a co-operative association—good articles, good workmanship, mutual employment, the acquirement of economical and temperate habits and instruction for themselves and children. They relate, however, that when they contemplated manufacturing gingham they saw their error in fixing their shares at £1. Their reason was that they might not deter poor persons from joining them. They did commence manufacturing. Two of their members having a little money in the savings bank, courageously brought it to them, and it was agreed that they should have 5 per cent. interest for it.

The great store in Downing Street, where the Congress met in 1878, has not the complete co-operative features of this humble store in Manchester of nearly half a century earlier. At the first Manchester Congress of 1832 it was reported also that the first Salford co-operators had established a Co-operative Sunday School, at which 104 male and female adults and children were taught, and they intended to request Lady Shelley to become a patroness.

Mr. George Simpson, of Mottram, who was the general secretary of the Queenwood Community before mentioned, prepared the rules of the United Journeymen Hatters of Denton, about 1840, of which he was secretary. From the first year every member was required to be a shareholder of £5, and he could pay up the amount by such labour as might be prescribed by the directors. When profits arose enabling interest to be paid it was limited to 5 per cent., and the surplus profit might be applied by the directors in augmenting the property of the society. It took no credit, and gave none. It was a well-managed manufacturing society, and had a useful career so long as Mr. Simpson was able to remain with it.

In 1860 the Co-operative Printing Society of Manchester was formed. A hundred shares were taken a few minutes after the decision to form it was come to, which shows with what alacrity societies are formed in districts where there are men who understand them. This society covers a good deal of ground now, and has a branch at Newcastle-on-Tyne. Mr. John Hardman was manager of the Manchester society. The first volume of this History was printed there. There is a Printing Society in London of some years' standing, which had a secretary who abstracted £2,000 of its funds, possibly with a view to test its stability. The proof was satisfactory to the secretary but not to the society.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Robert Taylor, formerly of the Colchester store, was the next manager, and the second volume of this History was printed by this society. In 1877, when the new Town Hall of Manchester was opened, 400 co-operators from various parts of England, delegates to a quarterly meeting of the Wholesale Society, were received by the Mayor (Alderman Abel Heywood), who addressed them after he had shown them the new Town Hall. He said that "he became a member of a co-operative society in the year 1828. These societies were then in their infancy, and those at the head of them did not understand how to manage them in the way they are managed now. Since 1830 the co-operative societies which existed in Manchester at that

<sup>1</sup> He used to come to me on Saturday afternoon for a loan of £5 to pay the workmen. He might have drawn upon the £2,000 he had sequestered. I sent in a claim to the directors for the money obtained from me by their agent. They refused to pay me on the grounds that I had no business to advance it, which my sympathy for the men led me to do.

time, some twenty-four in number, had dwindled away, because the members did not understand the principles they had espoused. It was very natural that this should be so, seeing that working men were so jealous of each other. The seed then sown, however, had taken root in the country, and they were there that day as the representatives of an opinion which in its influence had been growing that length of time. They were the pioneers of one of the greatest social movements of the day. They had called the attention of the whole country to their reports, they had established their own organs, and had secured friends amongst every class of society without any exception, and if with all this support they did not further succeed the fault must remain with themselves." The honourable and singular career of the Mayor, the office he held, the words he spoke, and the changed position of the co-operators whom he addressed, made a remarkable morning in Manchester.

A letter by an "Oldham Co-operator" in the *Times* of August 21, 1875, states that "in the Oldham Industrial a large number of members' investments do not amount to £1 each, yet these are the members who spend the largest amount of money at the stores, and hence, while they receive little or no interest, they receive the largest amount of dividend—in some cases £6 or £7 per quarter; while, on the other hand, those members who have the largest investments as a rule spend the least money. Therefore, while they receive at the quarter's end something like £1 for interest, their dividends are small compared with the other members."

Failsworth is distinguished for amusing adventures in cow co-operation. But unfortunately when the cow died the society died. Failsworth has also attempted cattle farming. Of course there are always difficulties in persons having chiefly factory knowledge, succeeding in field work. Field and cattle culture imply special knowledge of outdoor and animal life. It is difficult, as has been said, for mill hands to turn to farming as it is for farm hands to turn to weaving. Unless workmen have previously had some farm experience, they do not do well at hand work. However, Mr. Joel Whitehead best supplies the facts of what befell the early co-operators of Failsworth. He informs me the co-operative feeling is not of a recent date

in that place. He has often heard his father regret that working people had not the confidence in each other which would enable them to do their own business. But there was no protection against fraud. And often has he heard the rejoinder by persons asked to subscribe to a co-operative enterprise that they durst not entrust their little property where it could be stolen with impunity.

About 1838 a number of youths, whose ages would range from thirteen to sixteen years, began to club their pence together with the object of renting a plot of land to grow potatoes upon. They intended to delve the land themselves, collect manure, buy seed, plant and reap the potatoes or whatever grew, and sell them amongst their neighbours. Of course their ideas of Co-operation were crude, but there was the germ of the principle in their minds, even at their early age. However, their means were too slender for some of them to comply with the terms of subscription of one penny per week. They got behind with their cash contributions before there was a sufficient sum to purchase seed, which damped the ardour of the others who had managed to muster their share weekly. At that time pennies were as scarce in the pockets of lads as shillings are now, consequently nothing came of their juvenile attempt.

Eight or ten years later a number of very young men directed their attention once more to co-operative effort. They subscribed in larger sums than they had been able to do before, and actually bought a cow and had it killed in a barn. They sold it out to their neighbours, but they either sold at too low a price, gave too much weight, or had too much waste. Their deficiency could not arise from excessive wages paid, because all their work was done for nothing, except a trifle to a butcher for killing. But whatever the cause, the balance was on the wrong side of their humble ledger. So down went the society. For about ten years after the collapse of cow-selling no one had the courage to make another attempt. At length a few persons attempted to establish a Farming Society. They framed a code of rules under the title of "The Self-Help Co-operative Society," and took a farm of about nine statute acres. They bought two cows, half a dozen pigs, reared several hatches of ducks, and bred a number



of rabbits. They planted potatoes, cabbages, turnips, wheat, oats, and vetches. But the work was uncouth to them. They had not the practical knowledge nor physical qualifications necessary for success. They had the misfortune to lose a cow, which proved a death-blow to their enterprise, as they never numbered more than seven members, the lowest number recognised by law, and their means were too limited to bear the strain to which this thoughtless cow subjected them. So the farming society at Failsworth died with the cow. They called it in reporting language "succumbing to force of circumstances." Another attempt has since been commenced by a number of Newton Heath and Failsworth people, to solve the problem of food production on a small scale, and if they can get cows of more consideration they expect to succeed.

A fair example of the rapidity with which little difficulties succeed each other in the establishment of a store are contained in an account sent me by Mr. John Livingston, of Macclesfield. The wife of a member was thought to be living in a degree of affluence disproportionate to her expenditure at the store. She became a subject of observation, and was found outside the store with butter which she did not pay for. She was forgiven on condition of her husband leaving the society. Then a joiner, doing a job in the shop (who was a member) mistook his instructions, and worked at the till. The police disposed of him for a month. This meant some pounds of loss to the society. Next, one of the committee men, when he had learned the profits of the trade, commenced shopkeeping on his own account. Some loaves of bread discovered to be missing from the bakery, a potato was put in another loaf for a mark. But potato and loaf were both missing. This baker being discharged, the next spoiled two or three large bakings, of which each loaf was 4lbs. They were sold at a reduced rate to the poor. The directors afterwards learned from a servant girl that she heard the baker say he was paid for spoiling the bread. A donkey and cart were set up to carry in and out the bread baked for the members. But the animal died, not for his country's good nor that of co-operation. The store stood the market with potatoes on a Saturday, and chalked on a board the words "Co-operative Potatoes." They gave checks, and it occupied half their time to explain



their use amidst the derisions of the hucksters. The store next removed to a large shop and building in the same street, which cost £1,000 to the original owner. The store has since bought it and two cottages, now a steam bakery and drapery shop. They obtained a very smart shopman from another county, and he had a shopman for his bondsman. The first lot of coffee was ordered from a Liverpool house by the shopman from its traveller. In time the directors had to take the keys from their shopman, and sell a portion of the coffee at the wholesale price to his bondsman. The Liverpool house was written to to ascertain the weight mark. The answer was, "We have made a mistake and should have allowed you 18 lbs. as the tare." The persevering fellows get along smoothly now (1877).

There was a store in another energetic manufacturing town (name lost) which was held in the market-place. It never had any other place of business than its stall there. In what way Mr. Tidd Pratt enrolled it (if it was enrolled) has not been communicated to me. Mr. Tidd Pratt, had he been a man of curious mind, with a taste for describing the humours of humble men, could have told amusing instances of the adventures of the provident poor. This market store was commenced by some young men of means too small to take a shop, but with vigour of mind and determination to do something in the way of Co-operation ; so they negotiated with the market authorities for a stall, and the little enterprising committee, manager, salesman, secretary, and treasurer, or whatever officers they had, stood the market on Saturday afternoon and night—the only time when they were off work. They made more noise than profit ; but some nights they cleared as much as nine shillings, when their hopes rose so high that had the Government stood in need of a loan at that time, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had certainly heard from them, to the effect that if he could wait a bit they would see what they could do for him. Their difficulty was to make the public purchasers understand all about the division of profits. Surrounding traders supplied gratuitous information to the effect that the buyers would never hear of any profits. They had no checks to give—those outward and visible signs of inward "Tin," which in other stores allay suspicions.

Indeed, these market co-operators did not themselves understand the mystery of checks. But they promised a division of profits quarterly, which they had heard was the regular thing. The dubious purchasers of cabbage and treacle went away in hope. But before long, at the end of a fortnight, a shrewd old woman, who was afraid they would forget her face, appeared to ask if they would pay her dividend on the three pennyworth of potatoes she had bought two weeks ago. No doubt the store would have answered had not the salesmen, who had been all the week in hot mills, caught cold in the damp air of winter, which ended in rheumatic fever with two of them, and the co-operative stall became vacant. A good outdoor man, who, like Sam Slick, was waterproof and lively, could have made the "Co-op. Stall," as it was called, pay.

The Newton Heath Society, which was commenced in 1840 by a few enterprising young fellows, paid their salesman fourpence in the £ upon the sales he made—a simple way of fixing a salary, and as the sales were few and far between in those days he had a motive for endeavouring to increase the purchasers. But in later years, when the sales at stores exceed £100 a day, some limit would have to be found where the fourpence should stop.

Co-operation was unknown in Halifax till the spring of 1829, when the first recorded society was formed, May 29th in that year. An old and nearly worn-out member of the *Brighton Co-operator*, and another of the *Associate*, fell into the hands of Mr. Nicholson. These he showed to his father and three brothers, which induced them, and four others, to commence a society. Their first co-operative tea-party was held in April the following year. About two hundred persons, chiefly women, were present; the "Tea Feast," as they called it, being given gratis, in order that the women might get some practical and pleasant knowledge of co-operation. In the record of the society's existence they made a levy of four shillings a member to enable them to join the Liverpool Wholesale Society. At the end of two years and a half the Halifax co-operators found that they had made a profit on their capital of £200, twenty times as much as the same money would have yielded them in a savings bank. This society published in the *Lancashire and Yorkshire Co-operator*,

the first financial table of their progress which appeared. It exhibited as follows the position of the society for the first three years :—

TABLE OF THE FIRST HALIFAX SOCIETY.

Year.	Sales.			Expenses.			Clear Profit.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1830 ... ..	2,266	5	9½	73	10	7½	67	7	8½
1831 ... ..	2,921	16	8½	123	3	8	59	13	5½
1832 ... ..	3,196	2	10½	147	3	11	46	1	9½
Total ... ..	8,384	5	4½	343	18	2½	173	2	11½

The Halifax Society of to-day is one of the mighty stores of the time, and has a history to itself like Rochdale. If Halifax happens to lose £60,000, it still goes on its way, no more disturbed than one of the planets when an eccentric comet loses its tail.

Mr. J. C. Farn has given instructive instances of early successes of co-operative societies occurring between 1826 and 1830. A society had cleared £21 by the butchers' trade in one quarter; a second had been able to divide profits at the rate of 30s. per member; a third, which had commenced with 6s., had grown to £200 in eight months, £75 of which was profit; a fourth had a capital of £207, and had cleared £32 during the quarter; a fifth had its capital formed by payments of 6d. per week until it had reached £25, and in fifteen months it had cleared three times the amount in profit; a sixth, with a capital of £109, had cleared £172; whilst a seventh could boast of 700 members, who went boldly in for manufacturing.

The story of the Burnley Society is well worth telling. It has had great vicissitudes, years elapsing without progress or gain. Save for incessant attention, ceaseless nights of labour at the books, and unwavering devotion given by Mr. Jacob Waring, the society had never stood its ground. Other members worked; that Mr. Waring did so in the chief degree was acknowledged by the society when its day of success came by a public presentation to him. Sometimes, when the books had been worked at till late on a Saturday night and

almost into Sunday morning, the directors, when the balance came to be struck, were afraid to look at it, lest it should be against the society, as had so often happened before. For two or three years things were systematically going to the bad. No one could discover how or why. The stock entries, as goods arrived, were made in a small book. Being small it got mislaid, or overlaid at the time when the quarterly accounts had to be made up. It was so likely an occurrence that nothing was thought of it. Everything seemed regular and yet the result was never right. At length, not from any suspicion, but because no other change could be thought of to be tried, Mr. Waring suggested that a stock book be got so large that it could not be overlooked, so bulky that it could not be hidden, and so heavy that no one could carry it away and not know it. After that quarter profits reappeared and never went out of sight any more. Amid the many-advertised qualities of good account books, I never remember to have seen size and weight put down as virtues. Yet there must be some obvious merit therein; for a bulky book saved the Burnley store. It was not want of capital, not want of trade, not want of watchful management, the protracted deficits lay in small account-books. Thin books brought small dividends; fat books produced fat profits. In Burnley success seemed related to stock-book bulk.

Human nature is porcupine in Sheffield. Suspicion is a profession, disagreement was long an art among Sheffield operatives.

Leeds used to have great talent in this way; hence it has presented an entirely different phase of Co-operation from Rochdale—different in its aims, its methods of procedure, and its results. When Leeds men made profits they would spend them instead of saving them. A noble mill and grounds were to be sold. A year's profits would have bought the property and made a mighty store. Years after they had to give more for the ground alone than they could have had both land and building. Leeds has been remarkable for possessing two friends of the industrial classes, knowing them thoroughly, sympathising with them thoroughly, mixing with them, taking a personal part in all their industrial efforts, and accustomed to write and speak, and capable in both respects.



No town ever had two better industrial and co-operative expositors than John Holmes and James Hole. Mr. Holmes's economic advantages of Co-operation in reply to Mr. Snodgrass is a notable example of practical controversy, fair, circumstantial, and cogent. A gentleman whom nobody supposed existed save in the "Pickwick Papers," one John Snodgrass, a practical miller, was proprietor of the Dundas Grain Mills, Glasgow. He wrote against the Leeds Corn Mill. It was in defence of the mill that Mr. Holmes wrote in reply. The men of Leeds showed true co-operative honesty in their corn mill affair. When they made no profit they were advised to grind a cheap kind of Egyptian corn instead of more costly English or good foreign wheat. The Leeds co-operators would not use Egyptian corn on principle. Hard, suspicious, jealous, discordant, and greedy as many of them then were, they would not use it. They could make thousands by doing it, and yet they did not do it. They loved money, yet would not make it in a deceptive way. Mr. Gladstone showed in his great speech at the inauguration of the Wedgwood Memorial that beauty paid—that Wedgwood had found it so. Manufacturers may be expected to study beauty when it pays. The Leeds co-operators honourably stuck to purity when it did not pay.

In the winter of 1847 David Green, of Leeds, John Brownless, and others, began to meet in a room in Holbeck, used as a school and meeting-house by the Unitarians. Mr. Mill, afterwards known in London as Dr. John Mill, acted as minister. At times Mr. Charles Wickstead officiated. In that room the project of the Leeds Co-operative Corn Mill originated. The Leeds Co-operative Society furnished materials for as curious a history as any store in the kingdom.<sup>1</sup> Though its profits in 1905 exceed all other stores, there was a time when it lost upon everything it undertook to deal in; never were there such unfortunate co-operators. They lost on the flour mill; they lost on the drapery—they lost always on that; they lost on the meat department—they never could get an honest manager there; they lost on the tailoring; they lost on the groceries; they lost on boots and

<sup>1</sup> This may be seen in the "Jubilee History of the Leeds Society," 1897, by the present writer.



shoes; and they lost their money which they did take, for that used to disappear mysteriously. When Mr. John Holmes used to predict that they would surely make 5 per cent. profit, and eventually make more; that he should live to see the day when they would make £10,000 a year—the quarterly meeting, which had been looking long for dividends and seen them not, laughed at his speeches, would whistle as he spoke, and tap their foreheads to indicate there was something wrong there in the speaker, and exclaim, “Holmes has a slate off, and a very large one too! Holmes is up in the clouds again, and will never come down!” Mr. Holmes came to enjoy high repute as a true prophet.

One day he met a woman whom he had long known as a steady frequenter of the store, who gave him brief, indistinct answers to his friendly greetings, nothing like her accustomed vivaciousness of speech; and he said to her, “What’s the matter? Have you the faceache?” With some confusion she at length said, “She had been having some decayed teeth taken out. Her husband had found that he had a good accumulation of dividends at the store, and said she should have a new set of teeth and look as well as a lady, and they had not come home yet.” Mr. Holmes very properly complimented her husband on so honourable a proof of regard for his wife and pride in her good looks, and went away amused at this unexpected use of dividends which had never occurred to him.<sup>1</sup>

Of the interest which co-operators take in their property when they eventually get it, Mr. Holmes gives me this instance. Once when their mill was burnt down and they had some horses in the stable, hundreds of members ran from every part of the town and rushed into the stables, and, despite the fire, got the horses out safely. Had the horses been owned by some alien-minded proprietor, all the horses would have been lost.

For years the society had no educational fund. It made occasional grants to enable lectures to be delivered at the chief stores in their district—Holbeck, Hunslet, Woodhouse Moor, and other places. When I have had the honour to be one of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Clay, of Gloucester, used to relate that a co-operative boy being told that a new brother had come into the house, and asking who brought it, was told the doctor, answered, “Why did not mother get it through the store, then she would have had a dividend upon it.”

the lecturers I have argued for knowledge on commercial grounds, and taken for my subject, "Intelligence Considered as an Investment." The members whom it was most desirable to influence did not, as a rule, attend, not having knowledge enough to know that knowledge has value. Wise directors, who proposed an Educational Fund, found it opposed by the general meetings lest it should diminish the dividends. Mr. Holmes has likened making the proposal to walking in a garden immediately after rain. The paths, as any one knows, which were perfectly clear before, are suddenly covered with crawling creatures. They spring up out of the earth so rapidly that you can scarcely place your foot without treading upon the slimy things. In the same manner, when a proposal for Education Funds is made to an uninformed meeting, the worms of ignorance crawl forth on every path where their existence was not suspected; elongated and—in the case of human worms—vociferous cupidity carries the day against them.

Bradford, not far from Leeds, is another of the likely towns in which it might be supposed that Co-operation would flourish. Yet it did not soon attain distinction there. Its artisan population, energetic, conspiring, and resolute, suffered as much as the workpeople of any town. Chartism could always count on a fighting corps of weavers in Bradford. It has also had some stout co-operators, and in earlier days there was a branch of communists there who held a hall.

Liverpool has known co-operative initiation. Mr. John Finch, dating from 34, East Side of Salt House Dock, Liverpool (date about 1830), appeared as the treasurer and trustee of the first Liverpool Co-operative Society, and of the wholesale purchasing committee of that society. He reported that the "First Christian Society" in Liverpool has 140 members, the business at the store being £60 per week, and that a second Christian Society had 40 members. He mentioned the existence of five societies in Carlisle, and gave the names of five presidents, five secretaries, and five treasurers. The highest capital possessed by one of these societies was £260, the weekly receipts £50. He says, the "*Weekly Free Press* takes Co-operation up too coldly and is too much of a Radical to do the cause any good." Yet as the most important advocates of Co-operation

wrote in it, and the chief Metropolitan social proceedings were printed in it; as this was the only newspaper representing Co-operation, a public advocate of the cause should have held his disparaging tongue until there was a choice. The *Weekly Free Press* was a London newspaper, of 1830, which announced that it was "exclusively devoted to the interests of Co-operation." The Godalming Co-operative Society had passed a resolution "that every member who takes in a weekly paper shall substitute the *Weekly Free Press* in its stead." This society had very decided ideas how to get an organ of the movement into circulation. The *Weekly Free Press* was the earliest newspaper of repute which represented Co-operation.

The first Liverpool Society of 1830 was the earliest which prefixed an address to its rules. It was not very well written, but the example was a good one. It gave the opportunity of interesting those into whose hands the rules fell.

The Warrington Society of 1831 prefixed to its articles an excellent sentence from Isaiah, namely, "They helped every one his neighbour, and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage." The rules of this society are remarkable, like all the rules of the co-operative societies of that time, for their anxiety concerning the moral character of their members. They prohibited indecent and improper language in the committee-room; they would hold no meeting in a public-house; no person was refused on account of religious opinions; no person of an immoral character was admitted; and, if any member became notably vicious after he was a member, he was expelled unless he reformed. They fixed the interest on money borrowed at 5 per cent.—the earliest instance of that amount being named in official rules. One of their rules was that "when sufficient money was in their hands some kind of manufacture should be commenced." They refused, "as a body, to be connected with any political body whatever, or with any unions for strikes against masters." The society was pledged to "steadily pursue its own objects." Had it done so they would have been going on now. They, however, did think of progress. This Warrington Society agreed to form a library, to take in a newspaper, and to publish tracts on Co-operation—not common with many modern societies.

The Runcorn Economical Society of 1831 took for its motto the brief and striking passage, "Sirs, ye are brethren." But they did not apply the spirit of this to women, for they allowed no female to serve in any office. Neither did they permit any member to make known to any person who was not a member the profits arising from the society's store; a great contrast to the more profitable publicity of later societies. No doubt the Runcorners made good profits. No society ever forbids disclosures unless it has something to its own advantage to conceal. This society was creditably fastidious as to its members. It would have none but those of good character, who were sober, industrious, and of general good health. They did not wish sickly colleagues, nor would they admit a member under sixteen, nor above forty years of age—as though frugality was a virtue unsuitable to the young, or not necessary for the old.

In the rules of the first Preston Society, instituted on Whit-Monday, 1834 (I quote from the copy which belonged to Mr. John Finch, then of Cook Street, Liverpool), there was one against speaking disrespectfully of the goods of the society. It declared that "if any member did so, he should be excluded, and his share should be under a forfeit of six months' profit, together with a discount of 10 per cent. for the benefit of the establishment. The directors of many other societies would have more peace of mind if they could get passed rules of this description. This society accepted no member who belonged to another co-operative society, nor, if he had formerly belonged to one, unless he produced testimonials as to his character and the cause of his leaving. Any market man neglecting to attend when sent for, or not attending on market days at proper time, was fined a sum equal to that paid for another member's attendance. No money was paid to the wife of any member, unless her husband agreed to her receiving it. The Rochdale Society never put any of this nonsense into its rules, but paid the woman member, and left the husband to his remedy, which wise magistrates made it difficult for him to get.

The rules of the earlier co-operative societies form an interesting subject of study. Some of the societies seem to have expected rascallion associates, for they had rules for the



treatment of felons who might be discovered among them. But as a whole, a study of the rules would greatly exalt the political estimate of the capacity of the working class for self-government. The wisdom, the prudence, the patient devices, which co-operative rules display, must be quite unknown, or we should never have heard the foolish and wholesale disparagements of working people which have defaced discussion in Parliament.

America is not only a country where social ideas have room for expansion, but also seems a place where the art of writing about them improves. Certainly emigrants there will relate what they never tell at home. The Countess Ossoli used to value the "rough pieces of personal experience" (always fresh and excellent packages of knowledge when you can get them) which backwoodsmen would tell by their night fires. At home persons imagine home facts can have no interest, or conclude that they are well known. Few writers know everything, and it is well for the reader if an historian has but a limited belief in his own knowledge, and is minded to inquire widely of others. Under this impression I became possessed of the following curious history of the early adventures of a Lancashire store (England) related to me by a Lowell correspondent, whose name (the printer not returning me the letter) I regret not being able to give.

"The Blackley (Lancashire) Store commenced in the fall of 1860 with some forty members. We lost no time in renting premises and commencing business. The first year I acted as secretary, and then resigned my office to abler hands, which still retain it. I was, however, elected a director, and served in the various offices of Committeeman, President, Auditor, and Librarian, six years more. During the first year we acted on the plan of giving the storekeeper a dividend on his wages, equal to that paid to members on their purchases. We may, therefore, claim to be the first, or about the first, society in England to adopt the device. It was discontinued for a time—it has, however, been readopted. Our first president, who was an overseer in one of the mills in the village, was addicted to thinking that respectability was a good thing for us, and thought us fortunate when the *élite* of the village smiled on us. It was a great day for him when at one of our meetings we



had a real live mayor to preside, supported by the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, a canon of the Church, the village rector and other dignitaries. But it did us little good.<sup>1</sup> When the show was over there was an end of them, because they did not really care for us. But one gentleman, the Rev. Mr. Child, rector of a neighbouring parish, did take a kindly interest in us, and was always ready to help us when need came, and our members became much attached to him. At the end of the first year we set about building a store of our own, and our president designed that the laying of the corner-stone should be a grand affair. A silver trowel was to be presented to some one. Every one of us turned to our friend, the Rev. Mr. Child, whom we wished should possess it. Alas! our ceremoniously-minded president suggested it would not be courteous to our rector, the Rev. Mr. Deeling, to ignore him and offer it to another, though he had shown us little favour, and was under the influence of the shopocracy. At length we agreed to offer the silver trowel to the rector, in the hope that he would refuse it, and we should be free to confer it on our friend Mr. Child. Woe on us! Rector Deeling accepted it! He came and did the work, made us a short speech, took the trowel, and ever after shunned us. During the cotton famine many of our members suffered severely, but it was an inexorable condition with the committee of relief which came into being in our quarter, that no member of the store could receive anything from them so long as he had a shilling invested; and I shall long remember seeing the poor fellows coming week after week for a few shillings out of their savings, until it was all gone, whilst their neighbours, who had as good an opportunity but saved nothing, were being well cared for. I have often felt a wonder, on looking back to that dreadful time, how we got through it without coming to grief. A young society, with small capital, and putting up a building that cost £1,000, yet we stood well upright. I am certain if we had foreseen the events of the four years that were then before us, we should certainly have shrunk from encountering them. Nevertheless, we weathered the storms,

<sup>1</sup> But in many places and at many times it does do good, when persons of local or national distinction take part in co-operative proceedings. It testifies that the cause commands the interest of those who influence affairs.

and came out prosperous. I can only account for our success by the inherent soundness of the co-operative principle, and its self-sustaining power. It was certainly not owing to any particular ability or foresight in the men who had the conduct of it. I have no further facts from this American side of the water for you, and you do not ask for opinions, yet I cannot help giving some. The people of America, I think, are not ripe for co-operation—they have not been *pinched* enough, and the opportunities for individual enterprise are too good. They cannot understand anything but a speculation to make money, and the general moral scepticism is such that any one promoting a store would be suspected of wanting to make something out of it."

The story of the silver trowel is as pretty an episode as any to be met with in the history of co-operative adventures. The rector who took it did quite right, and the silly co-operators who offered it deserved to lose it. How was he to know that they did not intend to honour him when they pretended they did? The president who plotted the presentation was evidently a man well up in his line of business. It is a sacred rule of English public life never to bring to the front actual workers of mark, lest you should deter people from coming to the front who always hold back. If any honour is to be shown, the rule is to pass by all who have earned it, and bestow it upon some one never known to do anything. The Blackley co-operators are to be congratulated. They lost their trowel on sound conventional principles. But if they had no money left to make an equal honorary present to their real friend, the Rev. Mr. Child, they ought to have stood in the market-place on Saturday nights and begged, like Homer, with their hats, until they had enough money for the purpose.

In Radnorshire there is a parish of the name of Evenjobb—pleasant to a workman's ears. Pleasanter than Mealsgate or Boggrow, or other extraordinarily-named places which abound in Cumberland, is the wide, watery plain of Blennerhasset, with its little bridge and quaint houses. Here in this seldom-mentioned spot, is a very old-endowed Presbyterian meeting-house, where heretics of that order once had a secure refuge to themselves. The co-operative store there is a very primitive one; none like it exists elsewhere in England. The members

subscribe no capital and take no shares. Mr. William Lawson provided the whole. They have all the profits and he has all the risk and no interest, or if any accrues to him he spends it for the "public good." He has since wisely placed at the service of the members the opportunity of purchasing the shares for themselves, and remodelling the store on the plan of those which are self-directed and managed by members, who take interest because they take the risks.

There are stores of the self-helping type now established in the neighbourhood of Blennerhasset. I delivered in 1874 the opening addresses of the Aspatria Society's Store in Noble Temple, and a well-built, substantial, well-arranged store it is. From the name Noble Temple, the stranger would expect that it was some stupendous structure of unwonted beauty, or that some architect, amazed at the felicity of his conception, had given it that exalted name; whereas the ground on which it stands happened to be named "Noble," and the very flat and ordinary fields around are called "Noble Fields." Mr. W. Lawson built the hall for the people and considerably stipulated that it should be used on Sundays for useful addresses.

There are many of the Scotch societies remarkable for singular features. There was the Kilmarnock Store, which kept two cats—a black cat and a tabby cat—to catch the mice of the store. But a prudent member, thinking this double feline expenditure told unfavourably on the dividends, attention was duly called to it. At a Board meeting the question was argued all one night. There was a black cat party and a tabby cat party. It was agreed on both sides that the two could not be kept; and a strong partisan of the tabby cat moved the adjournment of the debate. In the meantime the black cat, either through hearing the discussion, or finding a deficiency of milk, or more probably being carried off by the kind-hearted wife of some member—disappeared; and the division was never taken; and the secretary, who was instructed to ascertain what effect its support would have upon the dividends, never concluded his calculations.

Mauchline, which Burns knew so well, never took to co-operation until the agitation for the People's Charter set men thinking of self-help. The committee began with giving

credit to the extent of two-thirds of the subscribed capital of each member. At a later stage in their career they extended the credit to the whole of the subscribed capital. The store must have been the most rickety thing out. Mr. Hugh Gibb, who was its president, and who understood co-operation, resisted this discreditable policy with an honourable persistence which rendered him unpopular. He constantly described credit as a foul blot upon co-operation, since it tended to keep the members in a state of dependence from which co-operation was intended to deliver them. By this time the store has got off the siding of credit, and is fairly upon the main line of cash payments.

The purchase of the Mechanics' Institution at Blaydon—Joseph Cowen, junr., was the founder—by the co-operative store is an instance of public spirit more remarkable than that displayed by any other society. This Mechanics' Institution has fulfilled in its day more of the functions which Mechanics' Institutions were intended for, than have been fulfilled elsewhere. Political, social, and theological lectures could be delivered from its platform. Its news-room was open on the Sunday, when it could be of most service to the working class. Eminent public men were honorary members of it; Garibaldi, Orsini, Kossuth, Mazzini were the chief names. The first honorary distinction conferred upon me, and one I value, was that of placing my name on that roll. On the Co-operative Store annexing it to their Society, they still kept the platform free and the news-room open on Sunday. The Institution is well supplied with books and the best newspapers of the day, accessible to all the members of the store free, and to the villagers not belonging to the stores on payment of a small fee. In addition to a free library, well supplied with desirable books, the social features of a working-man's club are added. This liberal provision for the education and social pleasures of the co-operators illustrates the high spirit in which the best stores have been conceived and conducted.

Co-operators have received distinguished encouragement to devote part of their funds to educational purposes whenever they have made known that they were endeavouring to form a library. The Sunderland Society, in 1863, received gifts of books from Mr. Tennyson, Mr. Mill, Lord Brougham,



and Mazzini in 1864. Later, in 1877, Professor Tyndall gave a complete set of his works to be presented to such Co-operative Society as I might select. They were awarded to the Blaydon-on-Tyne Society. Blaydon-on-Tyne is merely a small village, through which the river and the railway run, and distinguished as the birthplace and residence of Mr. Joseph Cowen, M.P. The houses are encompassed by grim manufacturing works, yet Blaydon has the most remarkable store next to that of Rochdale. It began to grow, and went straight on growing. Its book-keeping is considered quite a model of method. The store has grown from a house to a street. The library contains upwards of 1,500 volumes of new books. Of course they have an Education Fund of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. net profits, reserved for instruction. No co-operative society has outside respect which has not this feature.

The store assets increased by upwards of £500 during 1876, notwithstanding that there had been £20,119 in shares and profit withdrawn. After discharging horse and cart and all other accounts, there was paid in dividends £13,003. Mr. Spotswood informs me that their Education Fund was then close upon £400 a year, and that they were busy fitting up three branches with news-rooms and libraries.<sup>1</sup> There is a good science class in Blaydon, and most of the students are the sons of members. The pitmen and artisans of the Tyneside are distinguished among workmen for their love of mathematical science, and Professor Tyndall's gift will be read, and studied, and valued there.

<sup>1</sup> The Accrington and Church Society is hardly less remarkable for the amplitude of its educational devices. It has never been explained to strangers whether the Accrington Society is a Church store, or whether the Church owns the store at Accrington. The reader, however, is to understand that Accrington and Church are two adjacent places, used to designate the distinguished store in that neighbourhood.



## CHAPTER XXXIV

## VICISSITUDES OF INDUSTRIAL LITERATURE.

"'Tis not the wholesome sharp morality,  
 Or modest anger of a satiric spirit,  
 That hurts or wounds the body of a state,  
 But the sinister application  
 Of the . . . ignorant . . .  
 Interpreter who will distort and strain  
 The general scope and purpose of an author."  
 DR. JOHNSON, *Poetaster*.

CO-OPERATIVE literature has a distinctively English character. It is enthusiastic and considerate, advising gain only by equitable means. If it dreams, it dreams constantly how men can best take the next step before them. Nevertheless it would be the better in some respects for an infusion of Continental and American ideas into it. There are what naturalists would call "specific growths" of associative conceptions in other countries, richer and loftier than ours, and they would be valuable additions to the bleak and hardier products of Great Britain. The co-operative idea in its "germ state" has always been in the mind of man in all countries though in very atomic form. The power and advantage of mere unity were themes of the ancient fabulists, and philosophers speculated how unity in life might produce moral as well as physical advantages. Ancient India, as we now know, was rich in pacific thought which gave rise to pastoral communities. Comparative co-operation would be as interesting in social science as comparative language or comparative anatomy has been in philology and osteology.

The co-operative custom of Greek fishermen, of Cornish and Northumberland miners, of Gruyère cheesemakers, of

American and Chinese sailors; the devices of partnership of Ambelaika, show that for some two centuries constructive co-operation has been in action without being extended to other places or trades.

In other countries men of the "wilder sort" are wilder than in England, and have sometimes made communistic co-operation hostile and alarming.

One reason why the American nation is smarter than the English is, that the State has a Propagandist Department, and publishes costly books for the information of their people. To them England must seem parsimonious, seeing that we have growls in Parliament at the expense of printing the dreary-looking Blue Books we produce. There come over here from America, every year, volumes teeming with maps and diagrams of every kind, issued by the State Board of Health and the Bureau of Labour of Washington and Massachusetts. But we have no Bureau of Labour, though we owe everything to our being a manufacturing country.<sup>1</sup> No minister has ever thought of creating a State Department of Labour. It is with difficulty that we get, every three years, a few sheets printed of the Reports of Friendly and Co-operative Societies. Deputations of members of Parliament had to be appointed to wait on the Printing Committee to get this done; and it is believed the Committee took medical advice before meeting the deputation, as no one can foresee what the effects might be. For several years we had debates at our Annual Congress as to how the House of Commons might be approached with this momentous application. Yet it was not a question of loss. It is economy to give the information. In America it is given by the State to every society or manufacturer of mark likely to profit by it. The American reports mentioned, some years exceed 600 pages, handsomely bound and lettered, suitable for a gentleman's library. A considerable number of these volumes are sent to England, to societies and individuals publicly known to be interested in the questions to which they relate.

There is one instance in which the English Government,

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written the Board of Trade have issued monthly a *Labour Gazette*; its monthly appearance renders it especially useful.

it must be owned, has done more than any other government, in publishing Blue Books upon the condition of the Industrial Classes Abroad, written by Her Majesty's Secretaries of Embassy and Legation which were issued for three years under the direction of Lord Clarendon. The reports gave information as to the state of labour markets in foreign countries, the purchasing power of the wages paid compared with what the same money would procure at home; the manner in which workmen were hired and housed; the quality of the work executed; the kind of education to be had for families of workmen; the conditions of health in the quarters workmen would occupy, and other information of the utmost value to emigrant artisans and labourers.<sup>1</sup>

So long as social ideas on the continent are sensible, we seldom hear of them in our journals or from the lips of our politicians, even though the social movement may be extensive and creditable. But if an idiot or an enemy makes a speech to some obscure club it is printed in small capitals, as though the end of the world had been suddenly disclosed.

The *Standard* is a curious and mysterious source of this information. Though Conservative, it was long the only penny daily paper in which the working-class democrat found a full account of the proceedings in Parliament, so essential to their information. Besides, it gives copious accounts of the revolutionary leaders, their movements and speeches abroad. If Castelar, Gambetta, Victor Hugo, or Bakunin have made speeches of mark, or of alarming import, insurgent readers in England could find the most complete and important passages in the columns of the *Standard* alone. Possibly its idea is that these reports would excite the apprehensions of Conservative supporters, and terrify the immobile and comfortable portion of the middle class. In 1871, when the Industrial International Association met at Geneva, this journal told us that the internationalists raised the "Swiss flag without the cross, democracy without religion," and the Red Republic, and a good deal more. The late Mr. George Odger was at the Congress. At that time, the Emperor Napoleon being uncomfortable about the proceedings of

<sup>1</sup> These Books were issued on my suggestion, which was conveyed to Lord Clarendon by Mr. Bright.

Garibaldi, whom the association wished to invite to their Congress, M. Boitelle had the foreign members arrested as they passed through France, and their papers seized. Two of the members, Mr. George Odger and Mr. Cremer, "being of English birth," the *Standard* said "English like, they made an awful row about this insult to their country and their flag." Lord Cowley took the matter up; the men were soon at liberty, but their papers were detained by the police, and months elapsed before the delegates received them back. Napoleon wished to please Lord Cowley and to win the working men of Paris, so M. Rouher yielded up the documents to Odger, and "requested Bourdon, as the man whose signature stood first on the Paris memoir, to honour him with a call at the Ministry of the Interior."

The *Standard* of October, 1871, gave particulars of the trial of Netschaiew, and quoted a document produced on that occasion, purporting to detail the duties of the real Revolutionists being the profession of faith of the Russian Nihilists—presenting it as "the *ne plus ultra* of Socialism." A more scoundrelly document was never printed. The conciseness and precision of its language prove it to be the work of a very accomplished adversary. The creed contained eleven articles; but the quotation of six of them will abundantly satisfy the curiosity of the reader. They treated of the "position of a revolutionist towards himself."

"1. The revolutionist is a condemned man. He can have neither interest, nor business, nor sentiment, nor attachment, nor property, nor even a name. Everything is absorbed in one exclusive object, one sole idea, one sole passion—revolution.

"2. He has torn asunder every bond of order, with the entire civilised world, with all laws, with all rules of propriety, with all the conventions, all the morals of this world. He is a pitiless enemy to the world, and, if he continue to live in it, it can only be with the object of destroying it the more surely.

"3. The revolutionist despises all doctrines and renounces all worldly science, which he abandons to future generations. He recognises only one science—that of destruction. For that, and that alone, he studies mechanics, physics, chemistry

—even medicines. He studies night and day the living science of men, of characters, and all the circumstances and conditions of actual society in every possible sphere. The only object to be attained is the destruction, by the promptest means possible, of this infamous society.

“4. He despises public opinion ; and detests the existing state of public morals in all its phases. The only morality he can recognise is that which lends its aid to the triumph of revolution ; and everything which is an obstacle to the attainment of this end is immoral and criminal.

“5. The revolutionist is without pity for the State and all the most intelligent classes of society. Between himself and them there is continued implacable war. He ought to learn to suffer tortures.

“6. Every tender and effeminate sentiment towards relations—every feeling of friendship, of love, of gratitude, and even of honour—ought to be dominated by the cold passion of revolution alone. There can be, for him, but one consolation, one recompense, and one satisfaction—the success of revolution. Day and night he should have only one thought, one object in view—destruction without pity. Marching coldly and indefatigably towards his end, he ought to be ready to sacrifice his own life, and to take, with his own hands, the lives of all those who attempt to impede the realisation of this object.”

Society is very safe if its destruction is only to be accomplished by agents of this quality. No country could hope to produce more than one madman in a century, capable of devotion to this cheerless, unrequiting, and self-murdering creed. What there would remain to revolutionise when everything is destroyed, only a lunatic could discover. Poor Socialism, whose disease is too much trust in humanity, whose ambition is labour, and whose passion is to share the fruits with others, has met with critics insane enough to believe that Netschaiew was its exponent.

So late as when the Commune was a source of political trouble in Paris, the advocates of the Commune were called “Communists,” and the ignorance of the English press was so great, that these agitators were always represented as partisans of a social theory of community of property.



Whereas, in that sense, none of the leaders of the Commune were communists. The Commune meant the parish, and the same party in England—had it arisen in England—would have been called Parochialists. The advocacy of the Commune is the most wholesome and English agitation that ever took place in France. It arose in a desire of the French to adopt our local system of self-government. It was the greatest compliment they ever paid us. And the English press repaid it by representing them as spoliators, utopianists, and organised madmen. During the invasion of the Germans the French found that centralisation had ruined the nation. The mayors of all towns being appointed by the Government, when the Government fell, all local authorities fell, and the Germans overran the helpless towns. Had the Germans invaded England, every town would have raised a regiment by local authority, and every county would have furnished an army. Every inch of ground would have been contested by a locally organised force. It was this the Communists of France wished to imitate. The claim for local self-government was made chiefly in Paris, and for Paris alone—there being probably no chance of sustaining a larger claim: but as far as it went the claim was wholesome. The French have been so long accustomed to centralisation that their statesmen are incapable of conceiving how local self-government can co-exist with a state of general government. In England we have some 20,000 parishes. If we had centralisation instead, and any public man proposed that 20,000 small governments should be set up within the central government, he would seem a madman to us. But we know from experience that local self-government is the strength and sanity of this nation. The first time the French imitated this sanity, our press, with almost one accord, called them madmen. William de Fonvielle—whose brother, Count de Fonvielle, was shot at by one of the Bonapartes—exerted himself, in the French press, to procure for the Communists the name of Communardists, to prevent the English press making the mistake about them which wrought so much mischief on public opinion here. I assisted him where I could, but we had small success then.

The pretty name of Socialism had got a few dashes of

eccentric colour laid upon it by some wayward artists in advocacy, which casual observers—who had only a superficial acquaintance with it, and no sympathy for it which might lead them to make inquiries—mistook for the original hue, and did not know that the alien streaks would all be washed off in the first genial shower of success. Earl Russell pointed out, some years ago, that if the Reformation was to be judged by the language and vagaries of Luther, Knox, and other wild-speaking Protestants, it would not have a respectable adherent among us.

The English theory of "communism," if such a word can be employed here, may be summed up in two things : 1. The hire of capital by labour, and industry taking the profit. 2. All taxes being merged in a single tax on capital, which Sir Robert Peel began when he devised the income-tax. Labour and capital would then subscribe equitably to the expenses of the State, each according to its gains or possessions.

Workmen are not the only men with a craze in advocacy. No sooner does a difficulty occur in America as to the rate of railway wages, than sober journalists screech upon the prevalence of "Socialistic" ideas and put wild notions into the heads of the men. The ancient conflict between worker and employer always seems new to journalists. The mechanic calls his master a "capitalist," and the journalist calls the workman a "communist." The same kind of thing no doubt went on at the building of the Tower of Babel, and the confusion of tongues—which Moses, unaware of the facts, otherwise accounted for—was most likely brought about by journalists.

Among all the people of America, no one ever heard or a conspiring or fighting communist. The people who form communities in America are pacific to feebleness, and criminally apathetic in regard to politics. The communistic Germans there are peaceable, domestic, and dreaming. The followers of Lasalle, if they had all emigrated to America, would be insufficient to influence any State Legislature to establish Credit Banks. The railway men do not want Credit Banks. The Irish never understood Socialism, nor cared for it. The mass of working men of America do not even understand Co-operation. The Russians have some notions

of Socialism ; but Russians are very few in America, and Hertzen and Bakunin are dead. The French are not Socialists, and would be perfectly content as they are, were it not for the "Saviours of Society," the most dangerous class in every community. The term "communism" is a mere expletive of modern journalism, and is a form of swearing supposed in some quarters to be acceptable to middle-class shareholders.

In the time of the first Reform Bill, many of the active co-operators in London were also politicians, and some of them listened to proposals of carrying the Reform Bill by force of arms. This was the only time that social reformers were even indirectly mixed up with projects for violently changing the order of things. But it is to be observed that their object was not to carry their social views into operation by these means, but to secure some larger measure of political liberty. The conspiracy, such as it was—if conspiracy it can be called—was on behalf of political and not of social measures. The fact is, at that time, the action in which they took interest was less of the nature of conspiracy than of excitement, impulse, and indignation at the existence of the political state of things which seemed hopeless of improvement by reason. Indeed, the middle class shared the same excitement, and were equally as forward in proposing violent proceedings<sup>1</sup> as the working class. It is worthy to be particularised that the best known practical instigator of military action was a foreigner—one Colonel Macerone. If the reader will turn to the pamphlets which the Colonel published he will find that the kind of men Macerone sought to call to arms were far from being dissolute, sensual, or ambitious of their own comfort. The men who were to march on the Government were to be allowed but a few pence a day for their subsistence, and the Colonel pointed out the chief kind of food they were to carry with them, a very moderate portion of which they were to eat. Water or milk was to be their only beverage. A more humble or abstemious band of warriors were never brought into the

<sup>1</sup> It was Mr. Schofield, a banker, whose son was subsequently member for Birmingham, whose threat to march upon London the Duke of Wellington brought before the House of Lords. This was middle-class, not working-class intimidation.

field than those whom Colonel Macerone sought to assemble.

About 1830 a penny pamphlet was published by C. Bennett, of 37, Holywell Street, entitled "Edmund's Citizen Soldier." The first portion was "That true citizen-soldier, Colonel Macerone, remarks that the population of most countries are much better acquainted with the use of arms and with the practice of military movements than the English citizens are. Every man, and almost every boy, in America possesses the unerring rifle. In France, one man in every ten has seen military service. England, however, is the great workshop for arms for all the world, and the fault is our own if we learn not the use of the things we make. The pike, made of the best ash, is sold by Macerone, at 8, Upper George Street, Bryanstone Square, at 10s. The short bayonet will not protect a man from severe cuts from the long sword of a bold horse-soldier. The long pike will. A walking soldier runs tenfold more danger in flying from a horse-soldier, than in showing a determined neck-or-nothing front to the mounted horseman."

Of course, had revolvers been then a military arm, the half-famished pike-men had had a poor chance against the well-fed mounted horsemen. But the yeoman cavalry of that day were far from being unapproachable. My old friend James Watson, mentioned as one of the earliest co-operative missionaries on record, possessed one of the "Colonel Macerones," as these pikes were called. When I came into possession of his publishing house in Queen's Head Passage, London, I found one which had long been stored there. It is still in my possession. In 1848, when the famous 10th of April came, and the Duke of Wellington fortified the Bank of England because the poor Chartists took the field under Feargus O'Connor—and a million special constables were sworn in, and Louis Napoleon, then resident in London, was reported one of them—this solitary pike was the only weapon in the metropolis with which the "Saviours of Society" could be opposed. The Duke of Wellington could have no idea of the risks he ran. It still stands at the door of my chambers, and I have shown it to Cabinet Ministers when opportunity has offered, that they



might understand what steps it might be necessary to take, in case the entire Socialistic arsenal in England (preserved in my room) should be brought to bear upon the Government in favour of Co-operation.<sup>1</sup>

Joseph Smith, the "sheep-maker" (who would not allow an audience to depart until they had subscribed for a sheep for the Queenwood community), mentioned previously, returned to England in 1873, and after thirty years' absence, unchanged in appearance, in voice, or fervour, addressed a new generation of co-operators. He returned to Wissahickon, Manayunkway, Philadelphia, where he keeps the "Maple Spring" Hotel, where he has the most grotesque collection of nature and art ever seen since Noah's Ark was stocked. As I have said, he certainly had as much "grit" in him as any Yankee. There is no doubt that he began business on his own account at seven years of age in some precocious way. There is no danger to him now, in saying that his first appearance in politics was knocking an officer off his horse by a brick-bat at Peterloo in 1819, excited by the way the people were wantonly slashed by ruffians of "order." He was the only one of the Blanketeers I have known. The Blanketeers were a band of distressed weavers, who set out from Manchester in 1827 to walk to London, to present a remonstrance to George the Third. They were called "Blanketeers" because they each carried a blanket to wrap himself in by the wayside at night, and a pair of stockings to replace those worn out in the journey. Each poor fellow carried in his hand his "Remonstrance" without money or food, trusting to the charity of patriots of his own class for bread on his march. Thus these melancholy insurgents, armed only with a bit of paper to present to as hopeless a king as ever reigned, set out on their march to London. The military were set upon this miserable band, and Joseph Smith was one of those who were stopped and turned back at Stockport. He claims to have devised the first social tea-party at the Manchester Co-operative Society on December 24, 1829—a much more cheerful and hopeful undertaking than Blanketeering.

<sup>1</sup> The danger is more serious now since the "Macerone" was supplemented, in 1876, by the sword of John Frost,



In November, 1847, we had a German Communist Conference in London, at which Dr. Karl Marx presided, who always presented with great ability the principles of Co-operation with a pernicious State point sticking through them. He said in a manifesto which he produced, that the aim of the communists was the overthrow of the rule of the capitalists by the acquisition of political power. The aim of the English communists has always been to become capitalists themselves, to supersede the rule of the capitalists by taking the "rule" of it, into their own hands for their mutual advantage. A congress of the same school was held at Geneva in 1867. Contempt was expressed for the dwarfish forms of redress which the slave of wages could effect by the co-operative system. "They could never transform capitalistic society. That can never be done save by the transfer of the organised forces of society." This was no congress of co-operators, but of mere politicians with an eye to State action. Of the sixty delegates present only seven were English, and this was not their doctrine.

Of later literature, including chiefly publications, explanatory and defensive of Co-operation, appearing since 1841, may be named the *Oracle of Reason*, the *Movement*, the *Reasoner*, the *People's Review*, the *Cause of the People*, the *Counsellor*, the *English Leader*, the *Secular World*, the *Social Economist*, and the *Secular Review*. These journals, extending from 1841 to 1877, were edited chiefly by myself, sometimes jointly with others. They are named here because they took up the story of Co-operation where the *New Moral World* left it, and continued it when there was no other representation of it in the press. Every prospectus of these papers dealt with the subject, and the pages of each journal were more or less conspicuously occupied by it.

The *Oracle of Reason* was commenced by Charles Southwell, whose name appeared as editor until his imprisonment, in Bristol, when I took his place until the same misadventure occurred to me at Gloucester, being at the time on my way to Bristol to visit him in gaol there. When the two volumes of the *Oracle* ended, Maltus Questell Ryall and myself commenced the *Movement*. The *Oracle* and the *Movement* contained "Letters to the Socialists of England,"

and the *Movement* ended with the "Visit to Harmony Hall," giving an account of the earlier and final state of the Queenwood Community.

In 1845, I published a little book entitled "Rationalism," which was then the legal name of Co-operation; the societies then known to the public being enrolled under an Act of Parliament as associations of "Rational Religionists." The only reason for mentioning the book is, that the reader who may chance to look into it will see that the conception of the co-operative movement, the criticism and defence of its principles and policy pervading this history, were indicated there. The *Cause of the People* was edited by W. J. Linton and myself, Mr. Linton well known to young politicians of that day as the editor of the *National*, and to artists as the chief of wood engravers, and since as an advocate of the political and associative views of Joseph Mazzini. When the *New Moral World* ceased, I contributed papers on the social movement in the *Herald of Progress*, edited by John Cramp, and incorporated this periodical in the *Reasoner*, commenced in 1846, of which twenty-six volumes appeared consecutively. The *Counsellor* contained communications from William Cooper, the chief writer of the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers, and one from Mr. Abram Howard, the President of the Rochdale Society at this time.<sup>1</sup> The *English Leader*, which appeared under two editors, and extended to two volumes, continued to be the organ for special papers on Co-operation. The *Secular World* also included a distinct department, entitled the "Social Economist," of which the chief writer was Mr. Ebenezer Edger before named, who promoted Co-operation with the ability and zeal of his family, never hesitating at personal cost to himself. Afterwards the *Social Economist* appeared as a separate journal under the joint editorship of myself and Mr. Edward Owen Greening, who had previously projected the *Industrial Partnerships Record*, published in Manchester in 1862, the first paper which treated Co-operation as a commercial movement. Co-operative stores and productive manufacturing societies had by that time grown to an importance which warranted them being treated as industrial enterprises, affording opportunities to the general

<sup>1</sup> See Part II. "Hist. of the Equitable Pioneers of Rochdale."

public of profitable investment. The *Industrial Partnership Record* was the first paper that published "Share Lists" of those concerns. Mr. Greening afterwards established the *Agricultural Economist*<sup>1</sup> (a name suggested by me), the largest commercial paper the co-operative movement had had, to which, at periods, I was a contributor. Of separate pamphlets the best known is the "History of Co-operation in Rochdale," narrating its career from 1844 to 1892 (published by Sonnenschein). Mr. William Cooper, of the Rochdale Pioneers, in a letter to the *Daily News* (1861) reported that as many as 260 societies were commenced within two or three years after the publication of the "History" from 1844 to 1892, through the evidence afforded in the story of what can be done by people with the idea of self-help in their minds. In some towns the story was read night after night to meetings of working men.<sup>2</sup> This was also done at Melbourne, Australia. Many years after the appearance of the work, when its story might be regarded as old, Mr. Pitman reprinted it in the *Co-operator*, it being supposed to be of interest to a new generation of co-operators. It has been translated in the *Courier de Lyons* by Mons. Talandier and by Sig. Garrido into Spanish. It has appeared also in many other languages, so that the Rochdale men have the merit of doing things distant people are willing to hear of.

In 1871 the thirtieth volume of the *Reasoner* was commenced, which extended over two years. I issued it at the request of a committee of co-operators and others in Lancashire and Yorkshire, who made themselves responsible for the printing expenses. The editor was to be paid out of profits; but the comet of profits had so large an orbit that it never appeared in the editor's sphere.

The "Moral Errors of Co-operation," a paper originally read at the Social Science Congress in the Guildhall, London, has been frequently reprinted by various societies. The "Hundred Masters'" system, written in aid of the workmen

<sup>1</sup> Now the *Agricultural Economist*, an illustrated monthly paper of which thirteen-seven volumes have appeared.

<sup>2</sup> The Blyden Store was thus commenced by Mr. Cowen, M.P., reading the story to the villagers there. Many stores elsewhere were founded in a similar way.

when the famous struggle took place in Rochdale, when Co-operation halted on the way there, originally appeared in the *Morning Star*, a paper which gave more aid to progressive movements than any daily paper of that day in London. "Industrial Partnerships, Divested of Sentimentality," was written to explain their business basis. The "Logic of Co-operation" and "Commercial Co-operation" were two pamphlets of which many thousands were circulated, written in support of a question of establishing in co-operative production the same principle of dividing profits with the purchaser, which breathed life into the moribund stores of a former day.

In maturer years, some authors are glad to have it forgotten that they have written certain works in their earlier days. For me no regret remains. Other persons have, in many instances, considerably come forward and taken this responsibility on themselves, either by printing editions of my books and putting their own name on the title-page; or by copying whole chapters into works of their own, as their own; or by translating a whole book into another language, where it had the honour of appearing as an original work in that tongue by an author unknown to me. The "History of Co-operation in Rochdale" has as often appeared without my name as with it. In Paisley a summary was made of it and sold without my knowledge. After it was done a copy of it was sent to me, and I was asked whether I would permit it appearing without my name. I said I would; the reason given for the request being that people would be more likely to read the book if they did not know who was the author, which I took to be a delicate way of telling me I was not a popular writer. The Chambers Brothers published a paper in their *Journal*, by one of their contributors, who had interwoven essential portions of the Rochdale story into his article without reference to its origin, no doubt apprehensive lest the mention of the author might jeopardise its insertion. But when the Chambers became aware of it, they frankly supplied the omission by a note in their *Journal*.

Even distance, which lends enchantment to so many things, can do nothing for me. A few years ago an American preacher called upon me, and told me that one of his brethren



had printed an edition of one of my books, "Public Speaking and Debate" (written for co-operative advocates and others), and composed a preface of his own and put his own name on the title-page, which had done the sale a world of good. Some of the proceeds would have done me good in those days, but my friendly informant did not advert to the probability of that. Not long ago the editor of an *International Journal*, a paper issued in London with a view to furnish benighted Englishmen with original translations of foreign literature, bestowed upon his readers chapter after chapter of what he led them to believe, and what he believed himself, was a new and readable history of certain co-operative stores in England, based on the recent German work of Eugene Richter. After this had proceeded for some weeks I sent word to the editor that if he was at any expense in providing his translation, I could send him the chapters in English, as they were part of a book published by me in London sixteen years before. The editor sent me the volume from which he was printing, that I might see in what way he had been misled, and discontinued further publication. The book was entitled "Co-operative Stores" and published by Leypoldt and Holt, of New York, who probably had no knowledge from what materials the work had been compiled. Eugene Richter's work, on which the Leypoldt one is based, I have never seen. As far as reprints of anything I have written are concerned, I have given permission without conditions to any one asking it, content that he thought some usefulness might thereby arise. An unexpected instance of care for my reputation, as shown by the thoughtful omission of my name, occurred in the *Quarterly Review*. A well-known writer<sup>1</sup> having supplied an article on a Co-operative topic, the "History of the Rochdale Pioneers" was one of five or six works placed at the head of it. Of course the names of all the writers were duly added. But when the editor came to mine, something had to be done. To put down the book as authorless had been a singularity that might attract attention. To avoid this the name was omitted of every other writer in the list, and for the first time an article in the *Quarterly* was devoted to six nameless

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Frederick Hill.



authors, who had all written books of public interest. The envious man in *Æsop* by forfeiting one eye put out two others, by losing my head five other writers were decapitated, and have gone down to posterity headless in *Quarterly* history.

In June, 1860, a record of co-operative progress, conducted exclusively by working men, and entitled the *Co-operator*, was commenced. Its first editor was Mr. E. Longfield. Mr. Henry Pitman, of Manchester, was one of its early promoters. This journal represented the Lancashire and Yorkshire co-operative societies. By this time the reputation of the Rochdale Society continually attracted foreign visitors to it. Professors of political economy and students of social life frequently sent inquiries as to its progress. The letters which many of these gentlemen wrote, and the accounts they published in foreign journals of what had come under their notice in visits to England, form a very interesting portion of the papers in the *Co-operator*. Professor V. A. Huber, of Wernigerode, was a frequent and instructive contributor. Early in 1860, Gabriel Glutsak, civil engineer of Vienna, wrote to the Leeds Corn Mill Society for their statutes and those of the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers, with a view to submit them to his Government, and to ask permission to establish similar societies there. In 1863, L. Miloradovitsch, residing at Tschernigor, in Russia, two weeks distant from St. Petersburg, contributed an interesting paper on Russian associations. Mr. Franz Wirth, editor of the *Arbeitgeber*, Frankfort, contributed information concerning Co-operation in Germany, and reported concerning their German *Co-operator*, the *Innung der Zukunft*, by Mr. Schulze, of Delitzsch.

At first the *Co-operator* was a penny monthly. At the end of twelve months it was stated to have reached a circulation of 10,000 copies. This was an illusion by confounding the number printed with those sold. When the first shriek of debt occurred, bales of obstinate numbers were found which would not carry themselves off. Co-operation always proceeded under greater restrictions than those which trade imposed upon itself. Besides pledging itself to genuineness, fair weight, and fair prices, the editors of its official papers frequently refused to recognise applications of the principles, however profitable, which were not considered useful or

creditable to working men. Mr. Pitman, later editor of the *Co-operator*, kept no terms with any who wished to go into tobacco manufacturing or brewing, and ultimately became disagreeable to those who thought of having their children vaccinated.

The periodical literature of the societies continued to present various drolleries of thought, though not executed with that Japanese vividness of colour observable in its primitive efforts. If a passing notice of them is made here, it is merely that the narrative may not be wanting in the light and shade belonging to it. If the wilful reader should bestow as much attention upon periodicals the present writer has edited as he has upon co-operative journals, such reader would no doubt find (of another kind) quite as much matter to amuse him.

In the *Co-operator* the artistic imagination was again occupied, as in earlier years, in endeavouring to devise symbols of Co-operation, but nothing very original was arrived at. Societies fell back upon the old symbol of the Hand in Hand, to which they endeavoured to give a little freshness by writing under it the following verse—

“Hand in hand, brother,  
Let us march on.  
Ne’er let us faint, brother,  
Till victory’s won.”

It did not occur to the poet that the worthy brothers would faint much sooner if they endeavoured to march on hand in hand. Co-operation has many applications, but crossing the streets of London is not one of them, for if several persons should endeavour to do that hand in hand they would all be knocked down. The revivers of the “hand in hand” symbol seem to be regardless of Mr. Urquhart’s doctrine, imported from a land of lepers, that shaking hands is an unwarrantable proceeding, a liberty not free from indelicacy, wanting in self-respect on the part of those who offer or submit to it. The co-operator of 1862 had recourse to the figure of our old friend, the young man endeavouring to break a bundle of sticks; but he is now represented as doing it in so dainty and fastidious a way, that he is not likely to succeed if he operated upon them singly; and there stand by him two young co-operators, one apparently a Scotchman, wearing a

kilt, both, however, watching the operation as though they were perfectly satisfied that nothing would come of it. A belief that art must have some further resources in the way of symbols, led the editor of the *Co-operator* to offer a prize to students at the Manchester School of Art for a fresh emblem of unity. The best of four designs was published, representing an arch with a very melancholy curvature, on which reposed the oft-seen figure of Justice with her eyes bandaged, so that she cannot see what she is doing; and near to her was a lady representing Commerce, who appears to be playing the violin. Underneath was a youth apparently tying the immemorial bundle of sticks, and a pitman wearing a cap of liberty, with a spade by his side, apparently suggesting that freedom was something to be dug for. In the centre was a spirited group of three men at an anvil, one forging and two striking, in Ashantee attire, the limbs and body being quite bare. The flying flakes of molten iron must have been encountered under great disadvantages. The action at the forge is certainly co-operative, but the editor betrayed his scant appreciation of it by saying it would make a capital design for "our brothers in unity" (the Amalgamated Engineers were meant); but "our brothers in unity" did not take it up.

The third volume of the *Co-operator* was edited by Mr. Henry Pitman. He introduced a new illustration in which two workmen were approaching two bee-hives with a view to study the bees' habits; but, unfortunately, a stout swarm of bees were hovering over their heads, making the contemplation of their performance rather perilous. A bee-hive does not admit of much artistic display, and bees themselves are not models for the imitation of human beings, since they are absolutely mad about work, and brutal to the drones when they have served their turn. A society conducted on bee principles would make things very uncomfortable to the upper classes, and the capitalists would all be killed as soon as their money had been borrowed from them. The popularity of bees is one of the greatest impostures in industrial literature. However, the *Co-operator*, under Mr. Pitman's management, was a very useful paper. Mr. Matthew Davenport Hill, Recorder of Birmingham, and Mr. William Howitt oft wrote in it very

valuable letters. Dr. King, of Brighton, sent information to it. Canon Kingsley and the chief of the friends of industrial progress with whom he acted were contributors to its pages. Writers actively engaged in the movement supplied papers or letters, and foreign correspondents furnished interesting facts and inquiries which will long have value. But the success of journals of progress is not measurable by their merits. The people the editor has in view to serve are the uninformed, and they do not care about papers because they are uninformed. It is to the credit of social propagandists that they appeal to reason. This is against their success, since reason is seldom popular. When Mr. Thornton Hunt left the *Spectator* he joined a journal which understood the popular taste, and the shrewd proprietor at once said to him, "Take note, Mr. Hunt, what we want on this paper is not strong thinking, but strong writing." The *Co-operator* had little strong writing, that not being in its line, and was not overweighted by strong thinking; but it had merits which deserved greater success than it met with. It very early hung out signs of debt, and gave a great scream on the occasion, and actually put a black border round the statement in its own pages, as though it was anxious to announce its melancholy demise while it was yet alive. Some one had revealed to the editor the difference between 10,000 printed and 10,000 sold. Mr. J. S. Mill and Miss Helen Taylor gave £10 each to promote the continuance of the *Co-operator*, of which eight more volumes were issued. In 1871, however, the debt amounted to £1,000. The editor, nevertheless, refused to relinquish it, or accept an offer from the co-operators to purchase it. It was not probable that he loved liability, though it had that appearance. It was, doubtless, from a natural reluctance to relinquish a journal which he had conducted with usefulness and honourable perseverance during so many years, that he clung to it. It had but one printer during all that time, who had cheerfully suffered that considerable debt to accumulate. If in patience or in faith he had shown this perseverance of trust, it was equally unprecedented and inexplicable. Had his virtues been known in London, he would have been much sought after by editors of other periodicals, who would have appreciated such a



printer. Ultimately the debt was paid rightly and creditably, mainly by gifts from co-operative societies and votes from the Wholesale, who paid at one time the residue unliquidated, of upwards of £500.

To the *Co-operator* has succeeded the *Co-operative News*, of which nine volumes had appeared, 1878. This journal is the official representative of the societies. A Newspaper Society was formed to establish the *Co-operative News*. At the request of the committee, which included the leading co-operators of the North of England, I wrote the earlier prospectuses of the paper, and as they purposed buying up Mr. Pitman's *Co-operator*, I and Mr. Greening relinquished to them the *Social Economist*, which we conducted in London, in order that the new journal might have a clear field and the widest chance of a profitable career. The *Co-operative News* is now owned by co-operative societies who hold shares in it. For a time individuals held shares. I was the last who did. In 1876 I resigned mine in order that there might be that unity in its ownership which, in the opinion of its promoters, promised most efficiency for its management. During an important period it was edited by Mr. J. C. Farn, who increased the economy of its management. It was afterwards conducted by Mr. Joseph Smith and Mr. Samuel Bamford. *Co-operative News*, though a relevant, is not a profitable name. The outside public look less into it than its general interest would repay, believing it to be a purely class paper. Indeed, co-operators would take it in with more readiness if it bore a fresher name—a routine title tires the mind. Working men some years ago would not take in the *Working Man*, one of the most instructive journals devised for them. Working men are not fond of being advertised once a week as working men : for the same reason the middle class would not be enthusiastic on behalf of a paper called the *Middle-class Man*. Mr. Cobden thought, when the *Morning Star* was commenced, that the public would value what they very much needed—news. But news is only of value in the eyes of those who can understand its significance, and that implies considerable political capacity. What the average public wanted was interpreted news—ready-made opinions—having little time and not much power to form their own. Journals which gave them less news and more



opinion had greater ascendancy than a journal which sought mainly to serve them by enabling them to think for themselves. If men in a movement knew the value of a good paper representing it, guiding it, defending it, they would certainly provide one. A co-operative society without intelligence, or an industrial movement without an organ, is like a steamboat without a propeller. It is all vapour and clatter without progress. An uninformed party is like a mere sailing boat. It only moves when outside winds blow, and is not always sure where it will be blown to then.

In commencing their *Journal* the co-operators entered upon a new department of manufacture—the manufacture of a newspaper. This is an art in which they had no experience, but in which they have displayed as much skill as people usually do who undertake an unaccustomed business. Journalism in its business respects requires capital, skill, and technical knowledge, as other productive trades do. Any one familiar with the mechanism of a newspaper can tell without being told—when it is conducted by charity. Every column betrays its cheapness. It is not the flag, it is then the rag of a party, and every page in it is more or less in tatters. Instead of being the weekly library of the members, consisting of well-written, well-chosen articles, readable and reliable, it is the waste-paper basket of the movement, and everything goes into it which comes to hand and costs nothing. No one is responsible for its policy ; its excellences, if it has any, come by chance ; its subjects are not predetermined ; the treatment of them is not planned ; and a journal of this description represents a movement without concert. Poverty is always fatal to journalistic force. Those who manage a poor journal mean well, but they do not know what to mean when they have no means. They cannot be said to fail, because men who aim at nothing commonly hit it, and this is the general sort of success they do achieve. Indeed, a journal may do worse than aim at nothing, because then nobody is hurt when its conductors strike their object. It is much more serious when persons are permitted to be attacked, and local views—however excellent—are put forward in its pages in a party spirit, with disparagement of others, producing excitement instead of direction. A representative journal owes equal

respect and equal protection to all parties, guiding with dignity, securing progress with good feeling. There is a difficulty in conducting an official paper—a difficulty everybody ought to see from the first—the difficulty of being impartial. Impartiality is generally considered insipid. Few writers can be entertaining unless they are abusive; and few editors are good for anything unless they are partisan. If they have to strike out of an article the imputations in it, they commonly strike out the sense along with it, until the article has no more flavour than a turnip. Still, if there be no choice, it is better to have a turnip journal than a cayenne pepper organ—better to have a salmon for an editor, who is always swimming about his subject, than a porcupine one, who is sticking his fretful quills into every reader, and pricking the movement once a week.

Every new member of a store should be required to take the official paper. This alone would increase the circulation of the *Co-operative News* 30,000 a year. If every new member took the paper, every old member would be very much wondered at if he did not take it also. No groceries carried into any member's house ought to be warranted unless the newspaper of the stores went with them.

Co-operation is like a bicycle. If those who ride it keep going they go pleasantly and swiftly, and travel far, but if they stop they must dismount or tumble. There are many great measures a statesman could devise, and which he would gladly have his name associated with, which he cannot venture to bring forward unless there be educated opinion to appeal to. He is obliged to confess that "the time has not arrived." This is in some cases a cant excuse put forward by timid or insincere statesmen. But the truth of the plea is too obvious where the public are ignorant. In co-operative societies, in their smaller way, the same thing is true. Every intelligent board of directors know that they could do much better for the society if the members were better informed. There is not a co-operative society in the kingdom which might not be twice as rich as it is, if the members were as intelligent as they should be. Without knowledge, all movement is like that of the vane—motion without progress, whereas Co-operation should resemble the screw steamer and unite motion with advancement.

## CHAPTER XXXV

## FAMOUS PROMOTERS

"Of all the paths which lead to human bliss,  
 The most secure and grateful to our steps,  
 With mercy and humanity is marked  
 The sweet-tongued rumour of a gracious deed."

RICHARD GLOVER.

IN 1848 Co-operation received unexpected recognition, great beyond anything before accorded to it, and one which only a man of singular fearlessness would have accorded: it was from John Stuart Mill. In a work, sure to be read by the most influential thinkers, he said: "Far, however, from looking upon any of the various classes of Socialists<sup>1</sup> with any approach to disrespect, I honour the intention of almost all who are publicly known in that character, as well as the arguments and talents of several, and I regard them, taken collectively, as one of the most valuable elements of human improvement now existing, both from the impulse they give to the reconsideration and discussion of all the most important questions, and from the ideas they have contributed to many, ideas from which the most advanced supporters of the existing order of society have still much to learn."<sup>2</sup> When this tribute was rendered to these social insurgents their fortunes were at a very low ebb. Only three years before they had publicly failed at Queenwood. The prophets who had done their best to fulfil their sinister predictions were exultant, contemptuous, and conceited. It was no pleasant thing to bear the name of "Socialist" when Mr. Mill spoke of them with

<sup>1</sup> Co-operators were then generally known by their old community name of "Socialists."

<sup>2</sup> J. S. Mill, "Pol. Econ.," vol. i. p. 265.

this generous respect. He even went farther than vindicating their character—he suggested a justification of one of the least accepted of their schemes. Mr. Mill said: “The objection ordinarily made to a system of community of property and equal distribution of produce—‘that each person would be incessantly occupied in evading his share of the work’—is, I think, in general, considerably over-stated. There is a kind of work, *that of fighting*, which is never conducted on any other than the *Co-operative system*: and neither in a rude nor in a civilised society has the *supposed difficulty* been experienced. In no community has idleness ever been a cause of failure.”<sup>1</sup>

Long before Miss Martineau visited the Socialist Communities of America she held communication with co-operators at home. “The Manchester and Salford Association for the Spread of Co-operative Knowledge” wrote to her, as her illustrations of Political Economy had interested the society. Miss Martineau sent a reply in which she professed that their interest in her labours was very gratifying to her. One passage is worth citing here for its valid import: “Within a short time, and happily before the energy of youth is past, I have been awakened from a state of aristocratic prejudice to a clear conviction of the equality of human rights, and of the paramount duty of society to provide for the support, comfort, and enlightenment of every member born into it. All that I write is now with a view to the illustration of these great truths: with the hope of pressing upon the rich a conviction of their obligations, and of inducing the poor to urge their claims with moderation and forbearance, and to bear about with them the credentials of intelligence and good deserts.” Miss Martineau took care to indicate that the equality which she favoured was the equality of human right, and not of condition.

Lord Brougham personally promoted Co-operation. The first part of the “History of the Pioneers of Rochdale,” by the present writer, was dedicated to him by his consent. Where others were content to vaguely and generally praise a principle, Lord Brougham would single out and name for their credit and advantage those who had promoted or served it. This is never done save by those who intend to aid a cause. Lord Brougham was the first politician of great mark who cared

<sup>1</sup> “Pol. Econ.,” vol. i. p. 251.

about general progress, and whatever faults he had of personal ambition, he had little of the common fear of being compromised by being identified with the promotion of social welfare, because the persons caring for it had unpopular opinions of their own on other subjects.

Those who write the most useful books have often to wait long for appreciation. At the time of their appearance the public may not be caring about the subject, and when it does care about it, it has forgotten those who have written upon it. This or some such cause has led to the comparative neglect of the books of Arthur John Booth, M.A., author of a work entitled the "Founder of Socialism in England" and of a volume upon "St. Simon," being a chapter on the History of Socialism in France, remarkable for its research and completeness of statement. This work, like the previous one named, has been far less spoken of and read in socialist circles than books so conscientious deserve to be. Several of the disciples of Robert Owen have been designated to write some memorial of him, yet to this day (1877) the most complete view of his principles and character which has appeared is that from the pen of Mr. Booth—which embraces other subjects than those in Mr. Sargent's life of Robert Owen, and gives a more detailed account of his efforts in originating public education and promoting the art of industrial association in England. No one can peruse Mr. Booth's book without acquiring a very high estimate of Mr. Owen's character and capacity. Mr. Booth records that Mr. Owen not only incited parliamentary committees to inquire into ameliorative plans and recommend them, but he supplied them with the designs of industrial establishments and calculations of costs which must have been the result of great labour and expense to him.

The disciples of St. Simon were mad compared with the disciples of Robert Owen. Gustave I'Eichthal, who had been born a Jew, and traversed many faiths, made his confession of Simonism in these terms: "I believe in God; I believe in St. Simon, and that it is *Enfantin* who is St. Simon's successor. To him," I'Eichthal said, "it is given to root up and to destroy, to build and to plant, in him all human life has its development and progress: in him are peace, riches, science, the future of the world. We know it, and it is this which



gives us strength. The world does not know it, and it is this which constitutes its weakness." This is the crazy adulation of the genuine enthusiast who has lost all measure of men, which the world is continually hearing, with decreasing power of believing. St. Simon was a man who had as much philosophy as enthusiasm. When he found himself unable to complete his schemes and on the verge of starvation, he determined to shoot himself at a certain hour. That he might not forget that unpleasant resolution, he occupied himself in the interval in looking over the schemes of reform to which he had fruitlessly devoted his life, and when the time came round he shot himself as he had intended. Human progress never advances either rapidly or far at once. All who undertake to introduce new views of an entirely distinct character from those prevailing, soon find themselves, as it were, outside of humanity, where, having few to sympathise with them, they oft fancy themselves deserted, when the fact is they have deserted the world. In time their originality becomes eccentricity, their solitariness renders them morbid, and eventually, like the disciples of St. Simon, they play more or less what their compeers deem fantastic tricks, and schemes which began in hope end in ridicule.

Onlookers continually forget that the progress of wisdom must always depend upon the capacity of the multitude to advance, whom ignorance makes slow-footed: these philosophers should not be impetuous. We know on legal authority that a fool a day is born, and they mostly live. Patience is as great a virtue in propagandism as fortitude.

Jules St. Andre le Chevalier was one of the disciples of St. Simon and one of their orators. A brother of the celebrated Père Lacordaire went to hear him address a large audience at Dijon. The devotion in the heart of the Simonian preacher carried everybody with him. It is wonderful to me how one so obese, adroit, and master of all the arts of this venal world, could have moved any one to enthusiasm. By personal grace, in which he excelled when young, he might have charmed audiences, but serious enthusiasm must have been impossible to him. Skilfulness which dazzled you, he had in abundance, but not a tone remained which could inspire trust in persons of any experience in enthusiasm; and St. Andre knew such

persons by instinct, and avoided them. He was a master in devices and resources, and amid men stronger than himself he would have been a force of value. Under other circumstances he was a costly colleague. At the co-operative agency, some years in operation in Charlotte Street, London, of which he was an inspirer, he saw fortunes confiscated which he should have prevented. He had seen in his French experience what others had seen in English movements, that it is an immorality to permit without protest generous men risking more money in any cause, however good, than they are able and willing to lose. It is either inexperienced zeal, or traitorous enthusiasm, which connives at risks and losses which warn men in the future against aiding unfriended causes. When the secrets of the Black Chamber of the late Emperor of the French were disclosed, it was found that St. Andre had an office in it, and was in the pay of the Second Empire. The function of agents of the Black Chamber was to corrupt the press of other countries, and obtain the insertion of articles in favour of the Bonaparte Government. The personal knowledge St. Andre had of social and political leaders in England, it appears, he was able to sell for a price—and did it. He died before the crash of that fraudulent Government came.

Mazzini, in presenting some books to the Sunderland Co-operative Society in 1864, said in a letter to Mr. T. Dixon: "It is my deep conviction that we are unavoidably approaching an epoch of mankind, history, and life, in which the ruling principle in all the branches of moral, political, and social activity will be the simple one—'Let *every* man be judged, loved, placed, and rewarded *according to his works*.' Of this all-transforming principle, you—the associated working men throughout Europe—are the precursors in the economical sphere."

Giuseppe Mazzini was as distinguished an advocate of Association in Italy as Owen in England, or Blanc in France, but it was the nature of Mazzini to dwell more on the moral conditions of progress than upon the material. According to Madame Venturi, who has given the most vivid account of Italian Socialism extant, associations of working men have spread rapidly in the cities of Tuscany, Lombardy, the Romagna, and Southern Italy, rising up in the footsteps of the

national revolution. That of Naples in 1860 counted more than twelve hundred members. All these associations have been organised in imitation of one founded by Mazzini, years before that time, in Genoa; and their character is quite distinct from that manifested by similar societies in England or France, which mainly attempt social and economical progress. The peculiarity of the Italian movement is that, while the working men of other countries start from a theory of *rights*, the Italian working men—like their great teacher—start from a moral point of view—a theory of *duty*. They take his motto, “God and Humanity,” and accept his doctrine—that rights can spring only from duties fulfilled. This characteristic of the movement among Italian artisans is also remarkable from the contrast it presents to the materialism of the aristocratic or moderate party in Italy, one of whose most prominent members, La Farina, has written, “The only parent of revolutions is the stomach.”

In the rooms belonging to these societies in France there is sometimes written up, “It is forbidden to discuss religion or politics”; whereas in Italy, instead of limiting themselves to material economic interests, they devote themselves likewise, if not prominently, to moral instruction and patriotic work. These societies contributed a large share of combatants to Garibaldi’s expedition, and to those subsequently despatched from Genoa to Sicily. Three-fourths of the signatures to the petition of 1860 in Italy, for the removal of the condemnation to death which had rested on the head of Mazzini for twenty-eight years, were by working men. The Genoese Society of that day wishing to celebrate the anniversary of the Sicilian insurrection, decreed that the best way was to purchase three hundred copies of Mazzini’s book, “Duties of Man,” and distribute them gratuitously to poor working men.

In Florence an Association was formed, called “Fratellanza Artigiana”—Working-men’s Brotherhood—which aims at a general organisation of the whole class throughout Italy, embracing the double aim of moral patriotic education—through a people’s journal, schools, circulating libraries, lectures, and the emancipation of labour, through the establishment of banks for the people in different localities, destined to furnish with advances of capital, such *voluntary* associations

of working men as give proofs of their honesty and capability, and intend to work independently of intermediate capitalists.<sup>1</sup> Since that date Professor Saffi, one of the Triumvirs of Rome in 1849, has promoted the formation of co-operative societies in Italy, having also English economic features ; co-operative stores, as we understand them, being established in many places.

Whether it is good fortune or ill fortune to be able to count an emperor among socialist advocates, altogether depends whether his personal character or career is likely to awaken confidence or distrust in associative life ; certain it is that an emperor has appeared on the side of modern Socialism. During his imprisonment in Ham, between 1841 and 1845, Louis Napoleon, who had previously resided in England and had probably seen Mr. Rowland Hill's plan, published one of his own, which he called by the same name, the "Extinction of Pauperism," in which he added the project of the State organising (which includes patronising and politically controlling) "twenty millions of consciences." The future emperor talked wonderfully like the Socialist agitators, whom he afterwards sent so liberally to Cayenne and colonised there. He said : "Manufacturing and commercial industry has neither system, organisation, nor aim. It is like a machine working without a regulator, and totally unconcerned about its moving power. Crushing between its wheels both men and matter, it depopulates the country, crowds the population [who survive, he must mean] into narrow spaces without air, enfeebles both mind and body, and finally casts them into the street when it no longer requires them, those men who, to enrich it, have sacrificed strength, youth, and existence. A true Saturn of labour, manufacturing industry, devours its children and lives but upon its destruction." Very few workmen know anything about Saturn and its unpaternal ways ; still this description with its socialistic exaggeration in every line, gives a substantially true picture that workmen have a bad time of it. That something more than Savings Banks are needed for the ill-paid workman, he shows in an admirable sentence : "To seek to mitigate the wretchedness of men who have not sufficient food, by proposing that they shall annually

<sup>1</sup> See Pref. to "Regulations of the Leghorn Society of Mutual Succour."



put aside something which they have not got, is either a derision or a folly." The Imperial Socialist writes: "It is a high and holy mission to strive to do away with enmity, to heal all wounds, to soothe the sufferings of humanity, by uniting the people of the same country in one common interest."<sup>1</sup> But breaking oaths, cutting throats, and deportations were not socialist methods of fulfilling this mission. This remarkable author caught the idea without caring for the principles which animated his famous teacher Louis Blanc. His essay, however, has much merit and some phrases of felicity, as when he contrasts the old feudality of arms with the modern "feudality of money," for which he had apparently an honest contempt all his life. This "plan" of socialism, which the late emperor sketched, it is but justice to say, has the merit of plausibleness in some respects, moderation of statement, silence on questions by which other writers have alarmed the reader, and a freedom from eccentricities of proposal which have so often submerged merciful schemes in derision.

The Comte de Paris has written a book, neither utopian nor paternal, of singular fairness and discernment upon "Trades Unions," which, indeed, does much more than describe them; it explains industrial partnership and Co-operation to the French workman; and, more still, it distinguishes and attacks the modern middle-class ideal of a state of things in which capital reigns supreme, and attracts all profit to itself, and as the *Spectator* puts it, "sternly represses, in the name of economic science and of law, all attempts of the workers to secure their independence and raise their condition by combination and organisation." It denotes great capacity for social thought in the prince to perceive that this ideal must be changed for one more equitable before society can have industrial peace within its borders.

In the story of the Lost Communities mention is made of Dr. Yeats as a teacher at the Queenwood Hall Educational Establishment. Dr. Yeats with honourable modesty reminds me that he was less known as a teacher and an author than the following gentlemen, who were all engaged at Queenwood,

<sup>1</sup> There was more force of writing in this pamphlet of Louis Napoleon than he afterwards displayed—probably owing to the revising hand of Louis Blanc, who was in communication with him at the time.



under Mr. Edmondson : John Tyndall, F.R.S., Edward Frankland, F.R.S., Thomas Hirst, F.R.S., H. Debus, F.R.S. Professor of Chemistry at the Royal College of Science for Ireland, Robert Galloway, dates from Queenwood ; and his colleague, the Professor of Physics, W. F. Barrett, was a pupil at Queenwood. An account of Prof. Tyndall's connection with Queenwood may be found in No. X. of the "Photographic Portraits of Men of Eminence" for March, 1864.<sup>1</sup>

The Dutch, who if they do dream always dream about business, succeeded in establishing successful Pauper Colonies on the east bank of the Zuyder Zee in 1818. The idea was derived from a Chinese mandarin, who presided over a colony of agricultural emigrants from China, situated at Java, in the East Indies. General Van Bosch brought the idea to Holland and originated the Dutch Colonies. In England the orthography of his name would have been altered into Van Bosh. In 1843 these colonies were visited and described by a member of the Agricultural Employment Institution of England, who reported that "Beggary and mendicity had disappeared in Holland, for in a journey of 500 miles he had seen only three little boys asking charity, one at Rotterdam and two at Delft, although the country had swarmed with beggars previously to the establishment of the Home Colonies." In 1832 Mr. Rowland Hill (subsequently Sir Rowland) published "A Plan for the Gradual Extinction of Pauperism." In 1857 I asked him to inform me whether the Dutch Colonies had been discredited or remained useful. He answered, "Since 1831, the year in which the greater part of the pamphlet was written, changes have taken place which materially affect the question. These changes are chiefly an improved poor law ; the establishment of systematic emigration and (as I believe) the abandonment of the Pauper Colonies in Belgium and Holland. With regard to any present discussion of the question, it would of course be necessary carefully to investigate the cause of such abandonment, but circumstanced as I now am, I need scarcely say that I have no time for it."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Published by Lovell, Reade & Co., Henrietta Street, Covent Garden.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Rowland Hill was the third of five brothers, of whom Matthew Davenport Hill, the Recorder of Birmingham, was the eldest. Mr. M. D. Hill was born in Birmingham, Sir Rowland in Kidderminster.

A work long needed appeared in 1878, one calculated to give systematic form to Socialism, namely, Mr. David Syme's "Outlines of an Industrial Science." Utterly different from many similar books, it is neither pretentious nor obscure, nor a theory of one idea. The reader soon finds he is in the hands of a writer who can think; not over the heads of common people—in a region of his own where no one can tell whether he is right or wrong—but in the sphere in which common people think and with the power of making plain what perplexes them. He shows there is no sense in the unexplainable name Political Economy, which if it means anything it is that the State should direct industry, which no body in England ever proposed or desired that it should. Then economists proceed by the deductive method; that is, they assume some principle of desire in all men, and infer from what that principle implies, what men should do to obtain their object. For instance, Mr. James Mill takes the principle that all men desire Power; his son, John Stuart Mill, assumes that all men desire Wealth mainly or solely. They, and economists generally, from Adam Smith downwards, define political economy as the science of wealth. This, Mr. Syme says, is treating mankind as monomaniacs of avarice, and he maintains that society would be equally impossible if men were scientifically misers or philanthropists. Wealth is no more a universal and sole motive than power, or honour, or health, or fame. Mr. Syme argues that there might as well be a science of each of these subjects as of wealth. Plainly, industry being wider than all, and being pursued from a thousand motives besides that of gain, an industrial science is a far more appropriate, a more needed and more instructive term. Mr. Syme, though a journalist, with whom writing in haste generally leads to inaccuracy of expression, is neither redundant nor careless, but brief and precise in expression.

A work of great value, entitled a "History of English Guilds," was written by Toulmin Smith, of Birmingham, and published subsequently by his daughter Lucy, who had assisted him in the great labour of compiling it. The information is such as could only be collected by one who had his sympathy and industry, and his immense capacity of research and peculiar knowledge where to look in the historic wilderness of early

organised industry. As respects the delineation of industrial life or utility of conception, no work has appeared which a co-operator seeking guidance from the wisdom of past times could more profitably peruse. Mr. Smith says, "The English Guild was an institution of local self-help, which, before poor laws were invented, took the place, in old times, of the modern friendly or benefit society ; but with a higher aim, for while it joined all classes together in a care for the needy and for objects of common welfare, it did not neglect the forms and the practice of Religion, Justice, and Morality."

In 1852 appeared the *Journal of Association* in London. It was conducted by several promoters of working men's associations. It advertised the tracts of Christian Socialists and the Central Co-operative Agency. It was a somewhat grave periodical. "Parson Lot" contributed some poetry to it, and its selections were good. The conductors had the advantage of knowing poetry when they saw it (which was a new and welcome feature in this species of literature), and some of them could write it, which was better.

The *Christian Socialist*, like other publications devoted to questions of progress, very soon appeared in two forms. The first volume was a tolerable large quarto, the second was a modest octavo. The work was altogether discontinued at the second volume. Its social creed was very clear. Its watch-words were association and exchange instead of competition and profits. Its doctrine as to Christianity was not quite so definable. It maintained that Socialism without Christianity is as lifeless as the feathers without the bird, however skilfully the stuffer may dress them up into an artificial semblance of life. Christianity may be true and sacred in the eyes of a co-operator, but he cannot well connect the special doctrines of Christianity with those of Co-operation. When Mr. Pitman associated anti-vaccination with Co-operation the incongruity was apparent to most persons. If an attempt was made to inculcate atheistic Co-operation few would approve the connection of an industrial scheme with that irrelevant form of opinion. Christian Socialism is an irrelevance of the same kind, though it sins on the popular side.<sup>1</sup> The editor of the

<sup>1</sup> "Christian Socialism" was a name which I never liked, but regarded as a mistake, tending to alienate on the one hand Christians who were not

*Christian Socialist* pointed out that "every Socialist system which has abided has endeavoured to stand, or unconsciously to itself has stood, upon those moral grounds of righteousness, self-sacrifice, and mutual affection called common brotherhood, which Christianity vindicates to itself as an everlasting heritage." But these four qualities of righteousness in the sense of right doing, self-sacrifice, mutual affection, and common brotherhood, are equally the attributes of the moral conscience among all men, and were the sources of co-operative inspiration. Special doctrines alone are the "heritage of Christianity" proper. Mr. Ruskin has summed up the characteristics of the Christian Socialist school in a remarkable passage. "I loved," he says, "Mr. Maurice, learned much from him, worked under his guidance and authority. . . . But I only think of him as the centre of a group of students whom his amiable sentimentalism at once exalted and stimulated, while it relieved them of any painful necessities of exact scholarship in divinity. . . . Consolatory equivocations of his kind have no enduring place in literature. . . . He was a tender-hearted Christian gentleman, who successfully, for a time, promoted the charities of his faith and parried its discussion."<sup>1</sup>

It is right, however, to say that the spirit shown by Mr. Maurice's disciples was free alike from condescension or assumption. They were not dogmatic; they asserted but did not insist on other persons adopting their views. You felt that it would be a pleasure to them if you could think as they did; but they made it but a temporary offence in you if you did not, and treated with equality every one in whom they recognised the endeavour to do that which was right according to the light he had. Mr. Thomas Hughes in his "Memoirs of a Brother" gives the authentic history of the origin of this party, in passages of robust disarming candour which is the charm of Mr. Hughes's writing. Though the term "Christian Socialist"<sup>2</sup> caused Co-operation to be regarded in Parliament

Socialists, and on the other Socialists who do not like to call themselves Christians. But being myself a Christian as well as a Socialist, I had no personal reason for objecting to the name (E. V. Neale, *Co-operative News*).

<sup>1</sup> John Ruskin, "Fors Clavigera," Lett. 22.

<sup>2</sup> The term "Christian Socialism" first appeared as the title of a letter in the *New Moral World* of November 7, 1840, signed Jos. Squiers, who dated from Thomas Street Infant School, Coventry, October 26, 1840. But there were several societies of "Christian Co-operators" about 1830.



for a time as a "sentimental" question, yet it must be owned that it greatly improved the general reputation of social ideas, and helped to divest them of the "wickedness" at first held to be associated with them. Since that day social science<sup>1</sup> has been accepted as a substitute for Socialism, and now there is a disposition to try sociology, which sounds innocent and learned. In party warfare some good words, like some good persons, get banished and pass as it were a generation in exile. Then there arise persons who, knowing nothing or caring nothing for the old hateful controversial connotations of the word, are struck by its simple fitness, and recall it. Schemes, like words and persons, undergo a similar fate. The Labour Exchange is an instance of this.

In due course there appeared tracts on "Christian Socialism." The first was a dialogue between "A Person of Respectability" and "Nobody the Writer." "Nobody," however, conducts his argument quite as vigorously as though he was somebody. He maintains that any one who recognises the principles of Co-operation as stronger and truer than that of competition is rightly called a "Socialist," and admitted that the followers of Owen, Fourier, Louis Blanc, and others came under this definition.

Mr. E. V. Neale wrote the first "Handbook for Co-operators," which he gave me, free of conditions, to publish at the Fleet Street House for their use. His works and papers have been very numerous on co-operative subjects. As the General Secretary of the Central Board his legal knowledge has been of great value to the body. Indeed, the co-operators years ago always spoke of him with regard and pride as "their lawyer." Mr. Neale promoted industrial association with munificent trustfulness, and is remarkable among his eminent colleagues for his perception of co-operative principle and for the fertility of the applications he has devised.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. William Ellis having been mentioned in the *Times* as the founder of social science, he explained (1873) that "fifty years ago it was my good fortune to be introduced to Mr. James Mill, and through him to his son, John Stuart Mill, to both of whom I am indebted for more than I can find words to express. They set me thinking for myself. One result of my studies and reflections has been the deep conviction that the elementary truths of social science—founded long before I was born—ought to be taught in all our schools; and for more than twenty-five years I have employed the greater part of the time which I could spare from business to promote such teaching, both as a teacher and a writer of little books intended chiefly for children and their teachers."



A paper by J. M. Ludlow, on "Trade Societies and Co-operative Production," was read in 1867 at the Industrial Partnership's Conference in Manchester. Another publication by Mr. Ludlow in 1870 was upon "Co-operative Banking," described as "written at the request of Mr. Abram Greenwood," and read by Mr. W. Nuttall at the Co-operative Conference held at Bury in that year. Mr. Ludlow, like Mr. Neale and Mr. Hughes, has written much on special co-operative questions, upon which, without legal knowledge, no one could write usefully. It was a great gratification to the societies, Co-operative and Friendly, when Mr. Ludlow succeeded Mr. Tidd Pratt as Registrar. Mr. Tidd Pratt is held in honourable remembrance for his patience and solicitude in promoting the soundness of the institutions in his charge, though he had never been personally interested in their welfare like Mr. Ludlow.

Previous to 1850 there appeared a series of "Tracts by Christian Socialists." The most remarkable was the tract by Parson Lot, entitled "Cheap Clothes and Nasty," whose vigorous pen never failed to call attention to any subject which he treated. All these publications sought to compass the same end—the social improvement of society. Their tone was so fair that any person might agree with their object without adopting their personal and peculiar views indicated upon other subjects. One tract explained the principles of the "Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations"; the object was defined as that of enabling the associates and their families to receive all the net profits arising from their labour, after they shall have had a just allowance for the work done by them. The only condition required was that the candidate for association must be of good reputation and a competent workman. It was prescribed that none of the associations connected with the general union shall ever be made the instruments or agents of political agitation.<sup>1</sup> The associates in their individual capacity were left at liberty to act in this matter as they pleased. A curious rule was to this effect—"The work shall not be disturbed by speculative discussion"; yet one of the

<sup>1</sup> This was prescribed in terror of the Chartist and other Franchise agitations, in which all workmen, good for anything at that time, took creditable interest.

tracts was a "Dialogue between A. & B.," two clergymen, "on the Doctrine of Circumstances as it Affects Priests and People," a subject which had often been discussed by the followers of Mr. Owen, not much to their social advantage. The subject included the greatest speculative question which had agitated the secularist portion of the working class for twenty years. It is a great merit to be noticed that the co-operators had the rare capacity of being teachable ; next to possessing knowledge is the faculty of appreciating sound direction when you get it. Without this, the progress which has been made had not been possible. In the earlier days of the movement there were scholars in it who lent many graces to its defence, but assiduity and completeness of service have been greater in later years among its educated "promoters."

The "Christian Socialists" were an entirely new force of opinion on the side of Co-operation. On the part of the earlier co-operators there was the genuine sentiment of morality, else they had never maintained the struggle they did against adverse fortune and unfriendly opinion. Defeated, they lost not hope ; treated as wild, they never abandoned their purpose, nor conceived permanent dislike of those from whose scorn they suffered. When loss and ruin came, when their hard-earned savings were gone, and they had, in old age, to begin again to save what they could, they abated not their trust that equity in industry would answer some day ; and none repined at what they had attempted at so much sacrifice. While these pages were being written grey-headed, feeble men came to the writer saying their loss had been a bad business ; but it brought no regret, and their last days were gladdened that they had helped against hope. There was a noble sense of rightness in all this. These men were mostly bad members of Churches, as far as formal and accepted belief went, but they were good members of humanity and truth according to their light. During the earlier period men and women—for women as well as men gave their all to the cause—when the day of life was past, and the decline came, and penury was left with the darkness ; were cheered by the light of conscience and duty. Such devotion commands generous regard, and a sort of glory seems to linger over the places where their otherwise undistinguished graves are to be found,

Not less honour and regard are due to those gentlemen who, owning the Christian faith, and having the advantage of higher culture than befel the majority of the humble members of the movement, did not hesitate to risk the unpopularity of sympathy with their rightful aims, and made sacrifices greater in a pecuniary sense, in order that social equity might prevail in common life, and commerce be redeemed from fraud and the poor from precariousness. With wider knowledge—with exacter aim—they with patient and laborious attentiveness, incredible save to those who saw it daily—advanced step by step the great movement to stages of legality and security. Among these—though he came later into the field—Mr. Walter Morrison is to be numbered as not less distinguished for tireless and costly unrecorded services.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

## LATER LITERATURE AND LEADERS

"When Cain was driven from Jehovah's land  
 He wandered eastward, seeking some far strand,  
 Ruled by kind gods, . . .  
 Wild, joyous gods. . . .  
 He never had a doubt that such gods were,  
 He looked within, and saw them mirrored there."

MORRIS'S *Earthly Paradise*.

SOME of these pleasant gods must have remained about until later co-operative days. Anyhow, our story now carries us among persons who needed them. The later literature of this movement has been comparatively free from outbursts of the pioneer times. Very seldom now does a co-operative orator break out with Gray's bard—

"Visions of glory ! spare my aching sight."

They do. The modern speaker does not see visions of this sort anywhere about. Saner poets sing—

"Never think the victory won  
 Till through the gloomy shades the radiant SUN  
 Of KNOWLEDGE darts his night-dispelling beams."

We let that sun alone now. We think of certain societies with thousands of members which have no Education Fund. We meet with fewer instances of permanently eccentric agitators. Now and then one appears who digresses into oddity. After long intervals of coherency he will act as though Nature had left a little snuff in his brains, which sets his idea sneezing unawares, and he mistakes the convulsion for vigour of thought ; but as a rule enthusiasm is more equable as society has become more tolerant.

Every party has sins and errors enough of its own to answer for ; but a co-operative movement has more to answer for, as it is the nursing-mother of individuality and freedom of action. Co-operation has not been worse off than other causes. What a wonderful orator was the late Lord Mayo when it fell to him to state the views of the Government ! It was my lot to listen to him. To have nothing to say, and to take three hours and three-quarters in saying it, was a feat of oratory Demosthenes could never equal. To speak as though you were every minute going to stop, and yet never give over, was a miracle of elocution. Members listened till they lost the power of hearing. They went to dine ; when they came back Mayo was still speaking. They went to the theatre ; when they returned he was still at it. Some went to Brighton to dinner, and when they came back Mayo had not given over. Lord Mayo lives in men's memories as a marvel. At that time members of Parliament awoke in their sleep, thinking that Mayo was still speaking. Everybody liked the Irish Secretary personally, but nobody expected to be called upon to like him so long at one time. When he went out as Viceroy to India, every one knew there would be no more mutineers, for if his lordship made a speech to them they would disband long before it was half over.<sup>1</sup> Had co-operators had an orator of this stamp the public would never have heard the end of it.

It is difficult to separate, in some cases, the literature from the leader. Both services are entirely blended in some persons. The last of the world-makers who followed in the footsteps of Robert Owen was one Robert Pemberton. He announced his scheme as that of the "Happy Colony," and he fixed upon New Zealand as the place where it was to be founded. The New World, as he conceived it, was to be circular. More mechanical and horticultural than any other projector, he avoided altogether parallelogrammatic devices. He declared his system was deduced from the discovery of the true attributes of the human mind. He had the merit of being solicitous both about education and the arts, and

<sup>1</sup> When he was assassinated the only physician in that district in India happened to be Dr. King, the son of Dr. King, of Brighton, who rendered all the help possible to the dying Viceroy.



spent much money in publishing books which were never read, and in devising diagrams which were never examined.

I had the pleasure to receive from the son of Dr. King a volume of "Thoughts and Suggestions on the Teachings of Christ," which I believe is quite unknown among co-operators. A copy ought to be in their libraries, first, as a mark of respect to the old propagandist, next, because of its intrinsic interest. It is written with more vigour and vivacity of thought than was shown in the *Co-operator*, which he edited, and which first made him known beyond the South Coast. For sixty years Dr. King was an active propagandist of co-operative principle. Lady Byron left him in her will a sum of money, "hoping," as she said, "that it might be in part dedicated to the promulgation of those ideas which had given her so much pleasure and consolation." It was in accordance with her wish that he was at the time of his death engaged in preparing some of his papers for publication. The volume of which I speak contains a selection from his writings published at his express request, in the hope that it might afford to others the same pleasure his conversation and writings had done to Lady Byron.

In 1875 Pierre Henri Baume, of whose eccentricity the reader has seen an account, died at Douglas, Isle of Man. He was born at Marseilles in 1797, and at an early age was sent to a military college at Naples, where he became private secretary to King Ferdinand. About the year 1825 he came to London. After being a preacher of Optimism, he became manager of a theatrical company, and subsequently by privation and calculation he amassed a considerable fortune, and bought land at Copenhagen Fields, London, and at Colney Hatch, together with a small estate in Buckinghamshire. After living about a quarter of a century in London he went to Manchester, and engaged in a movement to establish "public-houses without drink." He also instituted Sunday afternoon lectures to working men, which were carried on with varying success for several years. In 1857 he settled in the Isle of Man, and purchased an estate there. At Douglas he fitted up an odd kind of residence, the entrance to which he made almost inaccessible, and admission to which could only be obtained by those whom he had initiated into a peculiar knock.

In this little den he lived like a hermit, sleeping in a hammock slung from the roof, for the room was so crowded with dusty books that there was no space left for a bedstead, or even for a table on which to take his food. He resided in this place for several years, but his decease occurred at a tradesman's house in Duke Street, Douglas. In 1870 proceedings were taken by him to evict a number of squatters who had located themselves on his Colney Hatch property, which became known as "The Frenchman's Farm," as his former place at Copenhagen Fields was called the "Frenchman's Island." In 1832 M. Baume took out letters of naturalisation. He left the whole of his real and personal property, valued at £54,000, in trust for perplexing purposes never realised in the Isle of Man.

Some persons are deemed eccentric because they have some peculiarity, or because they differ from others in some conspicuous way. Whereas Mr. Baume seemed to have every peculiarity and to differ from everybody in every way. Though born in France, he began his career as secretary to King Ferdinand of Naples, and doubtless one or other of his parents was Neapolitan, for he had all the subtlety of the Italian and more than the suspicion of the Frenchman. Those who had earliest experience of him regarded him as a Neapolitan spy gone mad of suspicion. He must have been a most dangerous man if employed in that capacity. He would be always reporting plots, for he believed in them. He spent a part of his time in correspondence. His furtive mode was to send letters written on a half sheet of paper ready directed to himself and folded, to be returned to him. His part of the writing would abound in small capitals and underscored words, every sentence being written in the most careful manner in thick, black characters as legible as print. Each paragraph would be numbered and consist of questions concerning somebody of a most circumstantial and often most compromising character. A broad margin was left by the side of his writing for the information he desired, so that he might have his question and the reply returnable to him in the form of complete evidence. The only protection of those who wrote to him was to return the paper unsigned and have the answers filled in by another hand, and the replies composed on the plan often adopted by

certain ministers in Parliament, who, with great parade of candour, circumstance, and emphasis, answer the questioner without telling him anything. This was the precaution I took. The Baume correspondence with publicists of every class carefully filed by him must by the time of his death be sufficient to fill several houses. And if he has bequeathed it with his other property to the Isle of Man, a curious posterity will find wonderful entertainment some day.<sup>†</sup> His favourite mode of living in London was to lodge in a coffee-house, to which he would bring in a cart the peculiar bedroom conveniences necessary for himself (and the boy whom he reared), the articles being in a state of exposure, which excited the merriment of the whole neighbourhood. His mysterious ways as a lodger, and his frantic mode of running in and out of the house in all manner of disguises, soon alarmed the family, and his excited conduct in the coffee-room soon frightened away the customers. He would often try to get rooms in the private house of a Socialist lecturer, and his ingenuity was such that it was very difficult to prevent him; and if he once got in, it was far more difficult to get him out. His practice was to display a bundle of halves of banknotes, or bonds, making a show of wealth which tempted people of narrow means to put up with his ways in the expectation he might be useful to them, of which there was not the slightest chance. His banknotes were always in halves, and useless if lost—he was very circumspect in these matters. He was, after his kind, the greatest philanthropic impostor abroad, not in a conscious way, so much as in consequence of his manner of mind. Like many other benefactors he wanted the credit of giving without ceasing to hold. He had an honest craze for social and educational projects, and during his long life he was allured by them only. He had a suspicion, which never left him, that everybody was conspiring against him, and wanted to get possession of his money or some advantage over him. And he had as constant a conviction, very honourable of its kind, that it was a man's duty to resist injustice and knavery, and he would really make great sacrifices to defeat it. His misfortune

<sup>†</sup> No audited account was made public of the amount realised by his property, nor any details given of who appropriated it, or what was expended for the public benefit.

was that he never distinguished between knaves and honest men, but suspected them all alike. The only persons he seemed to regard without distrust were those who never asked his co-operation in any work of theirs. Those who were so artless as to think he might do something useful, and began to give attention to his schemes, he put to more trouble and expense than all his money was worth, and ended by laying down such impossible conditions of action that they ultimately turned away in weariness and contempt. There could not have been a greater calamity to any struggling movement than that Mr. Baume should take an interest in it. A man of irregular ability, considerable knowledge, great courage and audacity, an eloquent speaker, a voice of contagious force, an impassioned manner, handsome as he was, and opulent as he always gave himself out to be, he easily obtained ascendancy in working-class meetings. His boldness, his fire, his fertility of purposes naturally influenced those who knew nothing, and had nothing of their own but expectations. His abstemiousness of habit, which not only never diverged into indulgence—it seemed never to digress into sufficiency—lent an air of sincerity to his professions. He lived as though his object was to show upon how little a man could subsist, and in this way he maintained a vigorous activity until his seventy-eighth year.

In popular assemblies, where the right of the platform was given to all who entered, he could neither be repressed nor suppressed, nor without difficulty put down. When he once got influence in a society he seemed never to require sleep or rest. He was there the earliest and the latest, and at all intermediate times. As ready with his pen as his tongue, he drew innumerable placards, abounding in astonishing statements which struck the public in Manchester like a loose mill band, making them smart with rage and derision. He stuck his placards on doors and windows, and made the society he infested the ridicule and terror of the district. Mr. Owen reasonably taught that the sympathies of ordinary people were too confined, and ought to be extended to their neighbours. Mr. Baume brought sharp ridicule upon the wise sentiment by proposing that the mothers should suckle their children through an aperture in a metal plate, through which the mother was to place the nipple of her breast; the child was to



suckle on the other side, thus concealing the child and parent from each other, lest filial and maternal ties should frustrate the universal sympathies which were to be cultivated. The misfortune to the mother was, that as she could never see the tender face of her offspring, she could not be sure whether the right baby came to the aperture. But this detail did not trouble the mechanical philanthropist. A man so disastrously ingenious should have been shipped back to King Ferdinand of Naples without delay. It is wonderful that any wise and merciful scheme of improvement of social life ever gets public acceptance, seeing how many doors a popular cause leaves open for wild partisans to enter and ruin it.

Yet Baume's courage and subtlety could not fail to make him sometimes useful. Julian Hibbert, mentioned before, was rich, scholarly, and retiring. Between him and Baume, both being men of fortune, there existed the friendship of equals. Holding proscribed opinions, the fearless companionship of Baume was interesting to Hibbert; Hibbert subsequently met his death through the public indignity put upon him by Mr. Commissioner Phillips, an Irish barrister at the criminal bar. At his death he requested his friend Baume to take care that his skull was preserved for phrenological purposes. Phrenology was then a discovery of great interest, and Hibbert, having respect for the teaching of Spurzheim, wished to add to its illustrations at a time when a popular dread of dissection put impediment in the way of physiological and mental science. Hibbert's family being wealthy, and not sharing his intrepidity and love of new thought, determined to avoid this, and had the body removed at night to an undertaker's in Holborn. By what subtlety of watchfulness and disguises by day and by night Baume fulfilled his friend's injunction were never known. But his head found its way to the museum of Mr. Devonshire Saull. When the hearse arrived at night to convey Hibbert's remains away, the undertaker on the box discovered a mute on the hearse more than he had provided. His long cloak and hatband resembled the others, and it was only by getting sight of the glittering eye of the additional attendant that he became aware of a supernumerary being with him. It is said he drove with alarm, imagining some supernatural being had entered his employ.



When the burial party assembled in church, and the family mourners stood round the bier by torchlight—for his burial took place in the night—they were astounded to see Mr. Baume uncover his head, witnessing the last rites over the remains of his valued friend. It was remembering this, when Robert Owen was buried at Newtown, that made Mr. Rigby take precautions<sup>1</sup> in putting furze bushes in the grave, to prevent access to the coffin, and remaining by it until I went to relieve him at midnight, lest in some mysterious way Mr. Baume should appear in that lonely churchyard, impelled by some fanaticism for science, where he had no known authority to interfere. I shared none of Mr. Rigby's alarm, but I took his place as watch to satisfy his apprehension.

Only two or three years before Baume's death deeds were drawn up by which his property was to pass into the hands of the Manchester co-operators. Mr. W. Nuttall mainly negotiated the matter. Complicated arrangements proposed by Baume were of the old pretentious and impossible kind. The deeds were never completed, and, as everybody expected, when death obliged him to relinquish his hold of his property, it would fall into the hands of people alien to his sympathies and his projects, rather than to that party whose objects he had cherished in his mind for fifty years, who had borne with him, who alone cared for him, despite his eccentricities, and who would have preserved his memory with some honour and distinction by carrying out, in his name, the sensible part of his ideas. A book might be written on the Idiots of Progress.

One who attended to everything in his time, namely, James Silk Buckingham, certainly deserves mention as being the author of a large volume, in which he proposed and described a Model Town Association. Mr. Buckingham was some time member for Sheffield, but before that he had travelled everywhere, and had written in favour of more schemes of improvement than any other man save Mr. Bridges Adams. Long before he closed his fertile career he was known to have written eighty volumes. Though devoid of originality, he had an amazing faculty for understanding every scheme of improvement made known, and had the art of presenting it in the most unobjectionable, agreeable, and—uninteresting way.

<sup>1</sup> Related vol. i.

Everybody approved of what he said, but never took further notice of it. He travelled through the most unwholesome climes, and preserved his health by inflexible temperance. He performed a prodigious amount of work without any apparent fatigue. He had a commanding presence, a pleasing voice, and a limitless fluency of speech. He had the sagacity to foresee the coming improvements of civilisation, and advocated them before the public saw their significance. Upon most subjects he gathered together all the authorities who had consciously or unconsciously favoured the project he discussed, and many historians might look into his forgotten books for information that might be long sought in vain elsewhere. He greatly improved his readers and his hearers in his time, but the silk in his name was in his nature, and in his manners; and the gratitude of the public has slidden over his memory by reason of the smoothness of his influence. A useful catalogue might be made of the number of projects which he advocated and which were realised during his life and since, for which he was ridiculed for proposing. His "Model Town" was entered by eight avenues, to which he gave the names of Unity, Concord, Fortitude, Charity, Peace, Hope, Justice, and Faith. It was this mixture of spiritual fancy with practical ideas that led the public to distrust him—not being sufficiently interested in his project to look at them discerningly.<sup>1</sup>

Most men who were attracted by Mr. Owen were men who had done something, or were capable of doing something. One of them was William Farquhar. The best steel engraving of Mr. Owen—the one in which he appeared most like a gentleman and philosopher—was executed at the cost of Mr. Farquhar, as a tribute of his regard. He claimed to be the real inventor of the Universal Under Water Propeller, subsequently patented by Lieutenant Carpenter, R.N. The circumstantial account he published of his invention, the spot at the London Docks where it first occurred to him, and his exhibition of it by desire of Admiral Sir Arthur Farquhar, were proofs of the paternity of the idea. Lieutenant Carpenter, who was in the room, had a model of a gun brig

<sup>1</sup> I attended in Sheffield a public lecture by Mr. Buckingham—when I was a Social Missionary there—controverting a passage in it. I afterwards wrote a letter in a Sheffield paper, which Mr. Buckingham reprinted in one of his books at that time.

with him, which the Admiral declared to be fruitless. The lieutenant was disheartened and took his model to a side table; William Farquhar followed him in sympathy, and pointed out exactly what was wanted. He said the idea never occurred to him, and shortly after patented it in very nearly the same words William Farquhar had described his plan of an under-water propeller. It was a curious instance of the generous incaution of an inventor.

In 1847 Mr. T. W. Thornton, a young English gentleman who lived upon a small fortune in Paris, published in French a life of Robert Owen, with an exposition of his social principles, which Mr. Thornton well understood. It was his custom to translate some of the most striking social papers on social subjects, which appeared in the French press, for publications in journals in England reaching the working class interested in such subjects. Original papers of his own, marked by much accurate thought, appeared in the early volumes of the *Reasoner*. He had given promise of a career of much usefulness, when he perished by cholera in Paris in 1849.

There has been Dr. Henry Travis, heretofore named, one of those remarkable figures who sometimes appear on the boundary of a new movement, gliding silently about, bearing the burden of a secret not vouchsafed to him, nor confided to him, but possessed by him—that secret is what Mr. Owen meant by his system. Mr. Owen did not understand himself, that is quite clear to Dr. Travis' mind, who has published elaborate volumes to prove it. He also demonstrates, in his way, that no one else ever understood the founder's idea. Dr. Travis avers that Mr. Owen used to say that he was not understood by any of his disciples or opponents. If that were so, how came Dr. Travis to understand him? He has told us<sup>1</sup> that the daughter of a baronet, who paid great attention to Mr. Owen's conversation, came to the conclusion that Mr. Owen could not explain himself. By what process, then, are we to understand that Dr. Travis understood him? By what transformation of genius did the disciple become master? The doctor tells us Mr. Owen's "teaching" has been so "defective" as to "produce the failure of all who have endeavoured to understand him." If everybody has failed, Dr.

<sup>1</sup> *Co-operative News*, October 16, 1875.

Travis must have failed, unless he is that singular and extremely isolated person, separate and outside everybody ! What Mr. Owen really said was, "I do not know if I have made one disciple who fully comprehends the import of the change which I so much desire to impress on the minds, and for the practice of all."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Travis quotes this passage, without seeing its "import" himself. It does not mean that Mr. Owen's disciples did not understand the principle of his system, but that they did not "fully understand its import" in practice as conceived by himself, who had thought about it the longest, and thought about it the most. The principles of Mr. Owen were few and simple. They were that material circumstances were indefinitely influential on human character. That every man is what he has mainly been made to be, by the circumstances which preceded his birth and which have operated upon him since. Therefore the most available method of improvement is to put him under better circumstances ; and if we cannot make him what we wish, we should rather compassionate than hate him, on account of the natural disadvantage from which he suffers.

These principles Mr. Owen did explain very well. These principles his disciples very well understood. These principles society has very widely perceived to be true, and has accepted to a degree which has exceeded the expectation of the most sanguine of his adherents. But this is a very different thing to perceiving, as the master perceived, all the applications of them, and all the changes that might be made in society to realise their "full" import. Great discoverers in science commonly foresee greater changes that may result from the adoption of the new thing they have introduced, than any of their contemporaries, though thousands of observers perfectly understand the thing itself. The law of gravitation, the circulation of the blood, the invention of travelling by steam, are all familiar instances. Common people at once understood the nature of these additions to human knowledge and power, and it will be erroneous to say that the originators were not understood by their followers, because these originators saw with a keener glance, and throughout a wider range, the application of their discoveries. It is creditable to Dr. Travis

<sup>1</sup> *Millennium Gazette*, October, 1856.



that he should succeed in improving the master's statement of his principle, or extending his discoveries. But it is an error of grace or gratitude to disparage the teacher or make him appear ridiculous by representing him as incapable of educating a single disciple to understand him. Next to Charles Bray, Dr. Travis is the most important writer who expounds Mr. Owen's views, upon the authority of long personal intimacy with him. In the Pioneer period of Co-operation Dr. Travis was an active and much regarded officer of that adventurous movement. But during a long period of years, which elapsed during its slow revival, he was seldom seen. We regarded him as an enthusiast without enthusiasm. Among those who rekindled the fire upon the old altar he was no longer prominent. He was not discernible amongst those who fanned the spark not quite extinguished. His voice was not heard in cheering the thin curls of ascending smoke, which surely indicated the coming flame. But when the pile is increased, and the fire is conspicuous in the world, and thousands of devotees stand around, the doctor reappears as the lost High Priest, proclaiming himself without misgiving as the master of the master. Nevertheless Dr. Travis was one of the few philosophers who studied the theory of Socialism and introduced the term Determinism into its discussions.

Mr. Max Kyllman, a young German merchant who resided in Manchester, rendered generous assistance to the co-operative, as he did to other movements. Like many other German gentlemen, he had a passion for promoting public improvement beyond that which Englishmen ordinarily display. Germans seem to regard the promotion of liberal principles as well understood self-defence.

Colonel Henry Clinton, of Royston, Herts, published several very interesting pamphlets upon the scientific and social arrangements of households, to which he gave the genial name of "Associated Homes." The deviser differed from Mr. Owen, and most others who have proposed social schemes, in maintaining the separate family system. Since this author first wrote, several schemes of the same kind have been devised, less comprehensive in spirit and detail than his. Colonel Clinton had a reasonable respect for all the human



race except the Americans, who defeated his grandfather, General Lord Clinton. But Colonel Clinton's amusing disapproval of the Americans does not prevent him giving generous aid to many social and literary projects by which they may benefit.

Professor V. A. Huber, of Wernigerode, died July 19, 1869. He was regarded as the father of Co-operation in Germany, and no man was considered to have done so much as he to circulate a knowledge of English co-operative effort in that country. In his own land he is said to have stood aloof from all parties. This has been a peculiarity of other eminent co-operators. A man must be intolerably wise who perceives that all his countrymen are in the wrong on everything, or intolerably dainty if there is no movement immaculate enough for him to touch or help on the way to usefulness. English Co-operation must have been very good or very fortunate to have interested him.

Mr. William Lovett died in London in 1877. He was a leading co-operator in the metropolis when that party first arose, and the greatest Radical secretary of the working class. Mr. Lovett observed everything and kept record of everything political. He wrote resolutions, petitions, manifestoes, remonstrances, and kept notes of interviews and councils at which eminent politicians of the time took part. He was the first person who drew up and sent to Parliament a petition for opening the British Museum and Art Galleries on Sunday. Its prayer, creditable, just, and useful, was not complied with at the end of fifty years after it was made. No statesman can say that progress proceeds in England in any reckless celerity. Late in life Mr. Lovett wrote the story of his career since he came, a Cornish youth, to London in 1821. It is the most documentary and interesting narrative of Radical days, written by an actor in them. William Lovett excelled the average of the working class in intelligence, in probity—and suspicion. He was distinguished alike by integrity of principle and mistrust. In politics he was a Radical irreconcilable. Yet he steadfastly sought to promote political ends by popular intelligence. Excepting in political transactions, he appears to have kept no records, and when he wrote in later life from impressions of earlier years, he was often inaccurate. In his

last work he made some statements of Robert Owen's views of marriage in communities—the like of which had never been known to any of his adherents. I reprinted them during Mr. Lovett's life-time, pointing out the manifest contradictions involved in his own narrative, and sent them to him, and also to his nearest friends, requesting his answer concerning them, lest after his death they might acquire importance from the authority of his name. But as he never made any answer it may be presumed that in that particular his statements were not capable of confirmation. At his burial (which took place in his 78th year) at Highgate, London, in August, 1877, I spoke at his grave on behalf of distant co-operators who held him in regard, testifying that as far back as 1821, when advocates of the people cared, some for political and some for social advocacy, it was a distinction of Mr. Lovett that he cared for both. He has been mentioned as the keeper of the Greville Street Store, London, in 1828. It was one of the distinctions of Mr. Lovett that it was his hand which first drew the People's Charter, which the pen of Mr. Roebuck revised. Mr. Lovett was imprisoned in Warwick Goal in 1839. When in prison he wrote the first book on Chartism which associated that movement with the intelligence of the people. I well remember the dreary hopelessness of political advocacy in those days and many years afterwards. At public meetings the same people seemed always to be present, and I knew their faces by heart. It seems wonderful now that the humble arguments they employed should ever have radiated from those meetings into cabinets, and that their claims should have come to be conceded. They looked forward to the glamour of a final conflict, and the splendour of a great concession, when it came to pass that all they claimed was given almost without their being aware of it, and with an air of reproach that they had made so much to do about what everybody was agreed upon. Under the friendship of Mr. W. Ellis, Mr. Lovett had devoted the latter years of his life to promoting secular education among the working class. He gave influence to his principles by his character, independence, intelligence, and integrity. He advanced his principles by his life as much as by his labours.

Robert Dale Owen died in America in 1877. He always

retained a liking for the Indiana settlement. He said that he hoped his children would always be connected with it. Robert Dale Owen had a great career in America in promoting enfranchisement of women, and a document he submitted to Abraham Lincoln influenced him more than any other in issuing a proclamation in favour of the slaves. (See correspondence of the Owen family and letter of his daughter, Mrs. Rosamond Owen Templeton, *Co-operative News*, January, 1904.) Mrs. Chappellsmith, of Indiana, was formerly the Miss Reynolds known to the Socialists of London in the period between 1835 and 1841, as an eloquent and accomplished lady who delivered public lectures in favour of their views.

American papers, who best know the facts concerning Robert Dale Owen, explain that he had suffered from excitement of the brain, ascribed to overwork in his youth. He was a man of singular moral courage, and to the end of his days he maintained the reputation of great candour. As soon as he found he was deceived by Katie King, the Spiritist, he published a card and said so, and warned people not to believe what he had said about that fascinating impostor. A man of less courage would have said nothing, in the hope that the public would the sooner forget it. It is clear that spiritism did not affect his mind although he presented gold rings to pretty feminine spirits. In his delirious days he fancied himself the Marquis of Breadalbane, and proposed coming over to Scotland to take possession of his estates. He had a great scheme for recasting the art of war by raising armies of gentlemen only, and proposing himself to go to the East and settle things there on a very superior plan. He believed himself in possession of extraordinary powers of riding and fighting, and had a number of amusing illusions. But he was not a common madman; he was mad like a philosopher—he had a picturesque insanity. After he had charmed his friends by his odd speculations, he would spend days in analysing them, and wondering how they arose in his mind. He very coolly and skilfully dissected his own crazes. The activity of the brain had become uncontrollable; still his was a very superior kind of aberration. Robert Dale Owen entirely recovered and remained himself to the end of his days. He was a graceful writer, of lightness

and imagination—a species of Washington Irving among publicists.

In 1848–9 the *Spirit of the Age* newspaper was issued, projected by Robert Buchanan, Alexander Campbell, and Lloyd Jones. When they no longer were able to sustain it, “Mr. Edward Search,” the trusted legal adviser of Mr. Owen, undertook to continue it, and I became the editor of it. For three months the projectors of the paper were retained upon it from consideration for them.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Search believed that a good literary social newspaper might be established, if conducted with equal fairness towards the middle class and the industrious class, whom it was designed to benefit. Arrangements were made with new writers, and there was at last prospect of a real newspaper of general interest. The projectors of the paper, however, desired to see it conducted in their way, and Mr. Lloyd Jones led the hostility to it, and wrote a disparaging letter in the last number over which his friends could exercise the right of inserting it. The *Spirit of the Age* had been bought in the hope of rescuing co-operative journalism from its insipidity and precariousness—then well apparent. As public support was then very limited, there was small prospect of establishing such a newspaper when a hostile one was announced to be immediately started by the first proprietors of the *Spirit of the Age*. I therefore saw it was my duty to advise Mr. Search that he would lose all further money he had arranged to devote to the journal he had bought, and that it was better to consider as wholly lost the £600 he had generously spent. And thus I relinquished an appointment which I valued more than any I had ever held. So the *Spirit of the Age* ceased. There has been no journal since like that which was then organised, and which might have been established, had co-operation been possible then among co-operators. The most eminent representatives of social movements in the chief European nations would have written in its pages. The last number of the *Spirit of the Age* contained the following announcement from the pen of Mr. Search :—

<sup>1</sup> My advice to Mr. Search was—pay them their three months' salaries and be quit of them. By retaining them they would have the power of destroying his paper, which they did.



"It is due to our readers to inform them that with this number the *Spirit of the Age* ceases. He who took to the paper at No. 18, and defrayed the entire of its liabilities, has since sustained it, to see whether an addition of quantity, more care in superintendence, and a well-considered devotion to the interests of those whose views the paper was intended to advance, would obtain for it that support which would give it an independent existence. During three months the experiment has been tried. Three months has been a short period of trial; and, money not being essentially important, the experiment would have been continued longer; but the receipt of Mr. Jones's letter, which will be seen in another part of this paper, has confirmed a fact previously entertained, that unless the *Spirit of the Age* was continued in precisely the same tone and style under which it had arrived at death's door, it would not be satisfactory to those who had originally issued it. It seemed, therefore, unwise to seek to give currency to views of which his letter shows we were, in the opinion of those who sought our aid, not satisfactory exponents. To continue this experiment under the same title would, it is evident, subject us to imputations which we would much rather avoid, by sacrificing the money which has been expended. And on the receipt of Mr. Jones's letter we found that the propriety of the resolution we had come to was at once established. For the sake of the cause itself, we deeply regret this want of accordancy with the views of management, and of the tone in which it was desired our advocacy should be conducted. Our own views are that just ends should be sought, and ought to be sought, by peaceable means. But the difference between us seems to be this, that the parties who launched this paper do not consider that peaceable and gentle-toned language is a necessary condition of the means of progress. All subscribers to the *Spirit of the Age* who have paid their subscriptions in advance, will receive the residue of the subscriptions due to them."

Scotland has had its co-operative papers as well as England. The *Scottish Co-operator*, edited by Mr. J. McInnes, was a small, neatly-printed, well-looking periodical, always clearly and sensibly written. Scotland has now a *Scottish Co-operator*



published weekly, often having illustrations like the *English Co-operative News*. Mr. McInnes also edited the Handbook of Co-operation of the Scottish Wholesale Society, in which the subjects selected were practical, various, and stated with great clearness and relevance.

English co-operative stores have at different times issued a small halfpenny or free journal, giving a monthly account of their proceedings, with a view to increase local information concerning them. Mr. Butcher projected one in Banbury. One was issued at Leicester, and others at Derby, Leeds, and Ipswich. There was the *South of England Pioneer*, edited by Mr. W. P. Carter, of Worthing. Quite a series have been devised in London for the use of the Metropolitan Society and stores of the South. One of the tracts published in Banbury contained a dialogue between a stranger and a member of the store, bearing the pleasant name of John Joyful. Co-operators always turn up cheerful.

In the Constructive period disagreeable writers have been few, and one sample of them will suffice. Mr. John Hill Burton's book on political and social economy, published by Chambers, though containing on the whole excellent advice to those whom it concerned, is as offensive to co-operators as a book can well be. The impression left on the mind of the reader is that every person, from Plato to Louis Blanc, who thought that society might be improved by mitigating competition, were not merely fools, but fools of so hopeless an order that reasoning with them was to reduce yourself to their level. For a people so fond of writing and so wonderfully gifted with the desire of expressing their opinions as the Scotch, we had scant contributions to co-operative literature. Were any one asked to name a nation with whose people Co-operation would be most congenial and most successful, they would first of all name Scotland. They are clannish, prudent, sagacious, calculating, and persevering. Of the daring which comes from duty and is inspired by duty they have much, but the daring of self-regardless impulse they have less than the English, who have far less than the Irish. Prudence is in the nature in Scotchmen; many wait to see whether a thing succeeds before they join it; and as success in Co-operation depends upon the concurrent

action of numbers, Scotch success has been slow. Yet in unexpected qualities the Scotch excel. They are masters in hospitality. An Englishman is pretty generous on impulse, on the whole more spontaneous; but he is liable to look back on what he does, and be of opinion that he has gone too far. A Scot is not so impulsive; but when he gives it is with his understanding and his heart, and he never looks back.

Co-operation has found its way to the Antipodes long ago. Mr. Charles Frederick Nichols, formerly an active member of the social propaganda in London, and since an active writer in Australia, has published several small works. "The Rise and Progress of Quartz Mining in Clunes" is one in which he advocated the introduction of the co-operative principle in the gold-fields of Australia. There was considerable prejudice to overcome in Melbourne (Englishmen when they emigrate carefully carry their prejudices with them) before a co-operative store was opened. But in 1872 one was commenced which had 200 members; and a Conference was contemplated of all those in the colony favourable to social concert among the people.

Many works have been written since 1844 illustrative of co-operative ideas. Edmund About, in France, wrote a Handbook of Social Economy, or the Worker's A, B, C. Among many eminent writers in England Professor F. W. Newman and Professor Thorold Rogers have written upon the question. Professor Hodgson, Professor Fawcett, and Mr. Thomas Brassey, M.P., have contributed books, papers, and addresses upon it. Mr. (since Lord) Brassey has published a work on "Co-operative Production," an indication that co-operative workmen have practical counsellors now, unknown in earlier years. His facts are drawn from sources of authority in England and on the Continent, and interpreted as only one familiar with great commercial undertakings could interpret them.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Brassey's father was an eminent friend of Co-operation, who promoted it practically by his example in his great business undertakings. He had not only Co-operation, but the true co-operative spirit in his mind. Sir Arthur

<sup>1</sup> Lord Brassey's volume, "Lectures on the Labour Question," contain information and suggestions of great value to students of commercial and productive Co-operation.

Helps, in the dedication of his "Life of Thomas Brassey" to the Queen, says: "Your Majesty will find that the late Mr. Brassey was an employer of labour after your Majesty's own heart, always solicitous for the welfare of those who served under him; never keeping aloof from them, but using the powerful position of a master in such a manner as to win their affections and to diminish the distance, which is often far too great between the employer and the employed." In recounting the facts of his life Sir Arthur says: "Mr. Brassey favoured and furthered the co-operative system; constantly giving a certain share of the profits to his agents, and thus making them partakers in the success or failure of the enterprise."<sup>1</sup>

One of the social advocates, of considerable activity in his day, was Mr. Robert Cooper. He had zeal and oratorical ambition, which was a merit so far as it showed care to render the manner of his lectures acceptable. Though he had incurred no peril he fared better than those who had. Mr. Fletcher, of Kennington, had given me his fortune, at that time £30,000, and for two years left his will in my possession. In those days inflation, coarseness, and fierceness of advocacy, which deterred the best inquirers from looking at your principles, were regarded as signs of spirit, and Mr. Fletcher, who was of that way of thinking, was told that I did not much encourage books with those characteristics at my publishing house in Fleet Street; he asked for his will, and making a new one gave it to Mr. Cooper in my presence, when we were at tea together one evening at his house. Mr. Fletcher died suddenly before I had knowledge of what had been said to him, or opportunity of explaining to him that now we had won freedom, the success of truth depended henceforth very much upon consideration, temper, and fairness in statement. And so I lost the only fortune that ever came near to me, and I should have regretted it had it not occurred in the course of doing what I thought right.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Life of Thomas Brassey," chap. iii. p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> In my employ I had a confidential manager who appropriated £112 of money entrusted to him. Thinking the needs of his family had been his temptation, I did not prosecute him, but assisted him to another situation, not of a fiduciary kind. I found out afterwards that he had told Mr. Fletcher that I "impeded the publication of Mr. Cooper's works, whereas I had specially instructed him (the manager) to do all in his power to promote them.

Of the lost Pioneers, Mr. Henry Hetherington, was among the projectors of the first London Co-operative Printers' Society of 1821. He was the foremost defender of the unstamped press, and his journal, the *Poor Man's Guardian*, which gave him his public name, was prosecuted 150 times before Lord Lyndhurst declared it to be a strictly legal publication. The Government were slow in those days in making things out. Hetherington died of cholera in 1849 at 37, Judd Street, London. A long procession filled the New Road as we conveyed him to Kensal Green. More than 2,000 surrounded the grave, where I delivered the oration, which afterwards appeared in the "Logic of Death," of which more than 100,000 have been sold.

The next grave I spoke at was that of Mrs. Emma Martin, who incurred more dangers than any other lady who spoke on social platforms. The address on her burial was reported in the *Leader* newspaper of 1854. It was the first time any metropolitan newspaper had accorded that kind of notice.<sup>1</sup>

Mightier names which have lent friendly influences and advocacy to the cause of industrial improvement, have since gone through the pass of death. One will occur to every co-operator—Canon Kingsley. No one was more resolute in maintaining his own opinions than he, and no one was more considerate in the judgment of opinions opposed to his own. The last time we met he asked me to come and see him, when in residency at Westminster, and observed, "The world is very different now from what it was when you and I commenced trying to improve it twenty-five years ago." There was no ground for taking me into comparison with himself, but it was done in that hearty courtesy which attached co-operators to him, even where some of us dissented from views he cherished. We all owe gratitude to his memory for great services. In no way could it profit him to befriend us, and therefore his civility was to us as a sign of sincerity.

<sup>1</sup> It was this address which alarmed the Rev. Dr. Jelf, who alarmed Mr. Maurice, who alarmed Canon Kingsley, who brought an incredible charge against the *Leader*. See "Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life," vol. i. p. 241.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

## THE TEN CONGRESSES

"We ought to resolve the economical problem, not by means of an antagonism of class against class ; not by means of a war of workmen and of resistance, whose only end is a decrease of production and of cheapness ; not by means of displacement of capital which does not increase the amount of social richness ; not by the systems practised among foreigners, which violate property, the source of all emulation, liberty, and labour ; but by means of creating new sources of capital, of production and consumption, causing them to pass through the hands of the operatives' voluntary associations, that the fruits of labour may constitute their property."—GIUSEPPE MAZZINI, Address to the Operatives of Parma (1861).

THIS comprehensive summary of co-operative policy exactly describes the procedure and progress gradually accomplished in successive degrees, at the ten Congresses of which we have now to give a brief account.

The Central Board have published every year during its existence closely-printed Reports of the annual Congress of the societies. Ten Reports have been issued.<sup>1</sup> They contain the addresses delivered by the presidents, who have mainly been men of distinction ; the speeches of the delegates taking part in the debates ; speeches delivered in the town at public meetings convened by the Congress ; the papers read before the Congress ; foreign correspondence with the leading promoters of Co-operation in other countries. These reports exhibit the life of Co-operation and its yearly progress in numbers, conception, administration, and application of its principles. Though the Reports are liberally circulated they are not kept in print, and thus become a species of lost literature of the most instructive kind a stranger can consult.

<sup>1</sup> In 1905 they amount to thirty-seven.



These annual reports, and the annual volumes of the *Co-operative News*, can be kept in every library of the stores, and every store ought to have a library to keep them in.

There have been three series of Congresses held in England within forty years—a Co-operative series, a Socialist series, and the present series commencing 1869. The first of the last series was held in London.

The following have been the Presidents of the Congresses and names of the towns in which they were held :—

- 1869. Thomas Hughes, M.P., London.
- 1870. Walter Morrison, M.P., Manchester.
- 1871. Hon. Auberon Herbert, M.P., Birmingham.
- 1872. Thomas Hughes, M.P., Bolton.
- 1873. Joseph Cowen, Jun.,<sup>1</sup> Newcastle-on-Tyne.
- 1874. Thomas Brassey M.P., Halifax.
- 1875. Prof. Thorold Rogers, London.
- 1876. Prof. Hodgson, LL.D., Glasgow.
- 1877. Hon. Auberon Herbert, Leicester.
- 1878. The Marquis of Ripon,<sup>2</sup> Manchester.

Mr. Thomas Hughes, M.P., was the president of the first Congress. He was one of the chief guides of the co-operative Israelites through the wilderness of lawlessness into the promised land of legality. From the Mount Pisgah on which he spoke he surveyed the long-sought kingdom of co-operative production, which we have not yet fully reached.

Among the visitors to the first Congress of 1869 were the Comte de Paris, Mr. G. Ripley, of the *New York Tribune*, the Hon. E. Lyulph Stanley, Mrs. Jacob Bright, Henry Fawcett, M.P.; Thomas Dixon Galpin, T. W. Thornton, Somerset Beaumont, M.P.; F. Crowe (H.B.M.'s Consul-General, Christiania, Norway), Sir Louis Mallet, Sir John Bowring, Colonel F. C. Maude, William Shaen, the Earl of Lichfield, and others.

Prof. Vigano, of Italy, contributed a paper to this Congress; and a co-operative society of 700 members, at Kharkof, sent M. Nicholas Balline as a delegate. On the list of names of the Arrangement Committee of the Congress was that of "Giuseppe Dolfi, a Florentine tradesman, who, more perhaps

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards M.P. for Newcastle-on-Tyne.

<sup>2</sup> The President on the second day was the Bishop of Manchester, and on the third day Dr. John Watts.

than any other single person, helped to turn out a sovereign Grand Duke, and remained a baker.”<sup>1</sup> He was a promoter of the People’s Bank and the Artisan Fraternity of Florence. There was an Exhibition of co-operative manufactures at this Congress, which has been repeated at subsequent Congresses.

The following list of names of the first Central Board of the Co-operators, which was appointed at the 1869 Congress, includes most of those who have been concerned in promoting the co-operative movement in the Constructive Period. Mr. Pare and Mr. Allen have since died :—

## LONDON.

Thomas Hughes, M.P.	James Hole, Secretary of the Association of Chambers of Commerce.
Walter Morrison, M.P.	George Jacob Holyoake.
Anthony J. Mundella, M.P.	John Malcolm Ludlow.
Hon. Auberon Herbert, M.P.	E. Vansittart Neale.
Lloyd Jones.	William Pare, F.S.S.
William Allen, Secretary of the Amalgamated Engineers’ Society.	Hodgson Pratt, Hon. Secretary of the Working Men’s Club and Institute Union.
Robert Applegarth, Secretary of the Amalgamated Carpenters and Joiners’ Society.	Henry Travis, M.D.
Edward Owen Greening, Managing Director of Agricultural and Horticultural Co-operative Association.	Joseph Woodin.

## PROVINCIAL.

Abraham Greenwood, Rochdale.	James Crabtree, Heckmondwike.
Samuel Stott, Rochdale.	J. Whittaker, Bacup.
T. Cheetham, Rochdale.	W. Barnett, Macclesfield.
William Nuttall, Oldham.	Joseph Kay, Over Darwen.
Isaiah Lee, Oldham.	William Bates, Eccles.
James Challinor Fox, Manchester.	J. T. McInnes, Glasgow, Editor of the <i>Scottish Co-operator</i> .
David Baxter, Manchester.	James Borrowman, Glasgow.
Thomas Slater, Bury.	

The Congress of 1870 was held in the Memorial Hall, Manchester. The practical business of Co-operation was advanced by it. Mr. Walter Morrison, M.P., delivered the opening address, which dealt with the state of Co-operation at home and abroad, and occupied little more than half an hour in delivery. Subsequent addresses have exceeded an hour. The example of Mr. Morrison was in the direction of desirable limitation. As a chairman of Congress Mr. Morrison excelled in the mastery of questions before it, of keeping them before it, of never relaxing his attention, and never suffering debate to loiter or diverge. Mr. Hibbert,

<sup>1</sup> Preface to Congress Report by J. M. Ludlow.

M.P., presided the third day. At this Congress, as at subsequent ones, during Mr. Pare's life, foreign delegates and foreign correspondence were features.

The Birmingham Congress of 1871 met in the committee-room of the Town Hall. The Hon. Auberon Herbert, M.P., was president. He spoke on the fidelity and moral passion which should characterise co-operators. Mr. Morrison, M.P., occupied the chair the third day. Mr. George Dixon, M.P., presided at the public meeting in the Town Hall. The *Daily Post* gave an article on the relation of Co-operation to the industries of the town. All the journals of the town gave fuller reports of the proceedings of the Congress than had been previously accorded elsewhere. At this Congress a letter came from Herr Delitzsch; Mr. Wirth wrote from Frankfort; Mr. Axel Krook from Sweden. Dr. Muller, from Norway, who reported that co-operative stores were extending to the villages; and that there is a Norwegian Central Board. Prof. Pfeiffer sent an account of military Co-operation in Germany—a form of Co-operation which it is to be hoped will die out. Denmark, Russia, Italy, and other countries were represented by communications.

The Congress of 1872 was held in Bolton. Bolton-le-moors is not an alluring town to go to, if regard be had alone to its rural scenes or sylvan beauty; but, as respects its inhabitants, its history, its central situation, its growth, its manufacturing and business importance, its capacious co-operative store, and the hospitality of distinguished residents, it is a suitable place to hold a Congress in. The town has none of the grim aspect it wore of old, when it was warlike within, and bleak, barren, and disturbed by enemies without. Flemish clothiers sought out the strange place in the fourteenth century, and possibly it was Flemish genius which gave Arkwright and Crompton to the town. In 1651 one of the Earls of Derby was beheaded there. The latest object of interest in the town is a monument of Crompton, who made the world richer, and died an inventor's death—poor. Bolton, however, did not owe Co-operation to Flemish, but to Birmingham inspiration. Forty-two years before, Mr. Pare delivered the first lecture given in Bolton upon Co-operation, in March, in 1830. He spoke then in the Sessions

Room of that day (which is now an inn), mostly unknown to this generation. I sought in vain for the *Bolton Chronicle* of the year 1830, to copy such notice as appeared of Mr. Pare's meeting. Unluckily, the *Chronicle* office had itself no complete file of its own journal. The public library of the town was not more fortunate. The volumes of the *Chronicle* about the period in question in this library are for 1823, 1825, 1829, and 1835. The 1830 volume was not attainable, so that the seed was not to be traced there which was found upon the waters after so many days.<sup>1</sup>

Many remember it as the Bolton wet Congress. Even Lancashire and Yorkshire delegates were not proof against Bolton rain. The Union Jack persevered in hanging out at the Congress doors, but drooped and draggled mournfully, and presented a limp, desponding appearance. Even the Scotch delegates, who understand a climate where it always rains, except when it snows, came into the hall in Indian file, afraid to walk abreast and confront the morning drizzle, against which no Co-operation could prevail. Some unthinking committee actually invited Mr. Disraeli, then on a visit to Manchester, to attend the Conference. Crowds would be sure to surround the splendid Conservative, and it would be sure to rain all the time of his visit—everybody knew that it would in Manchester—and yet the co-operators invited him and the Countess Beaconsfield to come dripping to Bolton with the 10,000 persons who would have followed. The town would have been impassable. The Co-operative Hall held a fifth part of them; and there would not have been any business whatever transacted while Mr. Disraeli sat in the Congress. It is not more foolish to invite the dead than to invite eminent living persons, unless it is known that they are likely to come, and can be adequately entertained when they do come. To the outside public it is apt to appear like ignorant ostentation. I have known a working-man's society, without means to entertain a commercial traveller pleasantly, invite a cluster of the most eminent and most engaged men in the nation, of such opposite opinions that they never meet each other except

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Thomasson, an illustrious manufacturer of Bolton, may be counted as the originator of Free Trade in England, of whom the reader will see a further notice.



in Parliament, to attend the opening of a small hall in an obscure town, where the visitors pay ninepence each for tea, when a great city would deem it an honour if one of them came as its guest.

This Congress held a public meeting in the same hall where Schofield, the republican, was murdered not long before in the Royalist riots in the town. It was during this Congress that Professor Frederick Denison Maurice died. Knowledge of his influential friendliness to Co-operation caused every delegate to be sorry for his loss. Few co-operators probably among the working class were able to estimate Mr. Maurice's services to society, or measure that range of learning and thought which has given him a high place among thinkers and theologians. A man can be praised by none but his equals, but the tribute of regret all who are grateful can give, in the respects in which they understand their obligations. This co-operators could do, for they were aware he had founded Working Men's Colleges in London to place the highest education within the reach of the humble children of the humblest working man in the nation. Mr. Neale, to whom I suggested the propriety of such a resolution, and to whom it had not occurred, said I had better write it—which I did. It was carried with grateful unanimity.

At this Congress M. Larouche Joubert informed us that the Co-operative Paper Manufactory made £20,000 of profits between June, 1870, and June, 1871—a period so disastrous to France. It used to be the common belief that Co-operation would fall to pieces in trying times, but in Lancashire it stood the test of the great cotton famine, and in France it stood the test of war. Equally during the German war the co-operative credit banks were unshaken. Professor Burns, writing from Italy, told us of the interest taken by Baron Poerio in a Co-operative Society of Naples, which actually existed among a generation reared under a government of suspicion. M. Valleroux reported that not a single productive society gave way in Paris neither under the siege nor the Commune.

Mr. Villard, the secretary of the Social Science Association of America, supplied a survey of co-operation in America, and papers were expected from M. Élisée and his brother M. Élie Reclus, of France, eminent writers on Co-operation. They



would have been present had not the suppressors of the Commune laid their indiscriminating hands on one of them. Too late M. Élisée Reclus was liberated from Satory, where he was confined by misadventure, on account of alleged complicity with the affairs of the Commune, which he opposed and deplored, being himself a friend of pacific, social, and industrial reform. He was (and his brother also) a prominent member of a society for promoting peace and arbitration of the national differences which led to war. Élisée Reclus being an eminent man of science, whose works have been translated into English, great interest in his welfare was felt by men of science in this country. M. Élisée's work upon the "Earth" is held in high repute among geographers. The memorial signed in this country, and presented to M. Thiers on his behalf, bore many eminent signatures, and was happily successful, as M. Reclus's life was in danger from privation and severity of treatment.

The Congress of 1873 was held in the Mechanics' Institution of Newcastle-on-Tyne, Mr. Joseph Cowen, jun., being president. His was the first extemporaneous address delivered to us, and its animation, its freshness of statement, and business force made a great impression. It was the speech of one looking at the movement from without, perfectly understanding its drift, and under no illusions either as to its leaders or its capacity as an industrial policy.

At this Congress was recorded the death of Mr. Pare. It was he who first introduced the American term Congress into this country, and applied it to our meetings. For more than forty years he was the tireless expositor of social principles.

Newcastle is an old fighting border town; there is belligerent blood in the people. If they like a thing, they will put it forward and keep it forward; and if they do not like it, they will put it down with foresight and a strong hand. There is the burr of the forest in their speech, but the meaning in it is as full as a filbert, when you get through the shell. Several passages in the speeches of the President of the Congress give the reader historic and other knowledge of a town, distinguished for repelling foes in warlike times, and for heartiness in welcoming friends in industrial days. The delegates were handsomely taken down the Tyne by

Mr. Cowen in the *Harry Clasper* steamboat; there was a Central Board meeting going on in the cabin, and a public meeting on the deck. If co-operators held a Congress in Paradise they would take no time to look at the fittings, but move somebody into the chair within ten minutes after their arrival. On leaving the *Harry Clasper* a salute of forty-two guns was fired in honour of the forty-two elected members of the Central Board, a tribute no other body of visitors had received in Newcastle, and no Central Board anywhere else since. The delegates were welcomed to the Tyneside with a greater hospitality even than that of the table—namely, that of the Press. The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* accorded to the Congress an unexampled publicity. It printed full reports of the entire proceedings, the papers read, the debates, and the speeches at every meeting. When the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and the kindred Society for the Promotion of Social Knowledge, visited Newcastle-on-Tyne, the *Daily Chronicle* reported their proceedings in a way never done in any other town of Great Britain or Ireland, and the Co-operative Congress received the same attention. Double numbers were issued each day the Congress sat, and on the following Saturday a supplement of fifty-six columns was given with the *Weekly Chronicle*, containing the complete report of all the co-operative deliberations. Thanks were given to Mr. Richard Bagnall Reed, the manager of the *Newcastle Chronicle*, for that tireless prevision which this extended publication involved. Of the *Chronicle*, containing the first day's proceedings of the Congress, 100,000 copies were published, and 90,000 sold by mid-afternoon. The same paper contained a report of a great meeting on the Moor, of political pitmen, which led to the large sale; but the cause of Co-operation had the advantage of that immense publicity. The Newcastle Moor of 1,200 acres was occupied on the first day of the Congress by a "Demonstration" of nearly 100,000 pitmen, and as many more spectators, on behalf of the equalisation of the franchise between town and county. The richly-bannered procession marched with the order of an army, and was the most perfect example of working-class organisation which had been witnessed in England.

Mr. Cowen, the president of the Congress, was chairman of this great meeting on the Moor. The Ouseburn Co-operative Engineers carried two flags, which they had asked me to lend them, which had seen stormier service. One was the salt-washed flag of the *Washington*, which bore Garibaldi's famous "Thousand" to Marsala, and the other a flag of Mazzini's, the founder of Italian Co-operative Associations, which had been borne in conflicts with the enemies of Italian unity. The best proof of the numbers present is a publication made by the North Eastern Railway Company of their receipts, which that week exceeded by £20,224 the returns of the corresponding week for 1872, which represented the third-class fares of pitmen, travelling from the collieries of Durham and Northumberland to the Newcastle Moor. The Congress also made acquaintance with the oarsmen of the Tyne. A race over four miles of water between Robert Bagnall and John Bright was postponed until the Wednesday, as Mr. Cowen thought it might entertain us to see it, and it was worth seeing, for a pluckier pull never took place on the old Norse war-path of the turbulent Tyne.

It was this year that Mr. Walter Morrison, M.P., presented the Congress with eight handsomely-mounted minute glasses, which, out of compliment it would appear to the Ouseburn Engineers, were described as Speech-Condensing Engines. Four of the glasses ran out in five minutes and four in ten minutes. The object of the gift was to promote brevity and pertinence of speech. There has been engraved upon each glass a couplet suggesting to wandering orators to moderate alike their digressions and warmth; to come to the point and keep to the point—having, of course, previously made up their minds what their point was. The couplets are these—

Often have you heard it told,  
Speech is silver, silence gold.

Wise men often speech withhold,  
Fools repeat the trite and old.

Shallow wits are feebly bold,  
Pondered words take deeper hold.

Time is fleeting, time is gold,  
When our work is manifold.

If terseness be the soul of wit,  
Say your say and be done with it.

Fluent speech, wise men have said,  
Oft betrays an empty head.

Conscious strength is calm in speech,  
Weaker natures scold and screech.

Patience, temper, hopefulness,  
Lead you onward to success.

In Athens, an accused person, when defending himself before the dikastery, was confronted by a klepsydra, or water glass. The number of amphoræ of water allowed to each speaker depended upon the importance of the case. At Rome, the prosecutor was allowed only two-thirds of the water allowed to the accused. At the Congress, the five-minute glass was generally in use, the ten-minute one when justice to a subject or a speaker required the longer time.

The Congress of 1874 was held in Halifax, when Mr. Thomas Brassey, M.P., was president, who gave us information as to the conditions of co-operative manufacturing. The authority of his name and his great business experience rendered his address of importance and value to us. The store at Halifax had come by this time to command attention, and the co-operative and social features introduced into the manufacturing of the Crossleys and the Ackroyds rendered the meeting in that town interesting.

Professor Thorold Rogers, of Oxford, presided at the London Congress of 1875. He stated to us the relations of political economy to Co-operation, sometimes dissenting from the views of co-operative leaders, but always adding to our information. It is the merit of co-operators that they look to their presidents not for coincidence of opinion but for instruction. Not less distinguished as a politician than as a political economist, the presence of Professor Rogers in the chair was a public advantage to the cause.

Mr. Wendell Phillips, of America, was invited by the Congress to be its guest. The great advocate of the industrial classes, irrespective of their colour, would have received distinguished welcome from co-operators who regard the slaves as their fellow working men, and honour all who endow them with the freedom which renders self-help possible to them. Mr. Phillips was unable to leave America, but a letter was read to the Congress from him.

At this Congress in a paper contributed, N. Zurzoff explained the introduction and progress of Schulze-Delitzsch's banking system in Russia. It was met by a very unfavourable feeling on the part of the Russian Government and the people. They did not understand it and did not want it. It took Prince Bassilbehikoff no little trouble to make it intelligible in



St. Petersburg. In 1870 thirteen banks were got into operation ; in 1874 more than two hundred. At the same Congress Mr. Walter Morrison read a paper giving an English account of the history, nature, and operation of the Schulze-Delitzsch German Credit Banks, the fullest and most explicit.

A proposal was made at this Congress to promote a co-operative trading company between England and the Mississippi Valley, and a deputation the following year went out to ascertain the feasibility of the project. Friendly relations have been established between the better class of Grangers. It is necessary to say better class, because some of them were concerned in obtaining a reduction of the railway tariff for the conveyance of their produce, by means which appeared in England to be of a nature wholly indefensible. But with those of them who sought to promote commercial economy by equitable co-operative arrangements, they were anxious to be associated. The plan devised by Mr. Neale, who was the most eminent member of the deputation, would promote both international Co-operation and free trade ; objects which some of the co-operative societies made large votes of money to assist.<sup>1</sup>

At the Glasgow Congress of 1876, Professor Hodgson, of Edinburgh, was our president. In movements having industrial and economical sense, Professor Hodgson's name was oft mentioned as that of a great advocate of social justice whose pen and tongue could always be counted upon. The working-class Congress at Glasgow had ample proof of this. Political economy has no great reputation for liveliness of doctrine or exposition ; but in Professor Hodgson's hands its exposition was full of vivacity, and the illustrations of its principle were made luminous with wit and humour.

At this Congress, Mr. J. W. A. Wright was present as a delegate from the Grangers of America, who had passed resolutions in their own Conferences to promote "Co-operation on the Rochdale plan." Mr. Neale and Mr. Joseph Smith promoted an Anglo-American co-operative trading company.

The Museum Hall, Leicester, was the place in which the Congress of 1877 was held. The Hon. Auberon Herbert was

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Neale was one of the deputation to New Orleans. At one point at which the vessel stopped, he accidentally fell into the sea, but maintained himself a quarter of an hour in the water until he was rescued.



president this year, and counselled us with impassioned frankness against the dangers of centralisation and described merits unseen by us in the adjusting principle of competition. He owned we might regard him as a devil's advocate, to which I answered that if he were so, we all agreed the devil had shown his excellent taste in sending us so earnest and engaging a representative. For the first time a sermon was preached before the delegates by Canon Vaughan, whose discourse was singularly direct. It dealt with the subject knowingly, and with that only ; and the subject was not made—as preachers of the commoner sort have often made it—a medium of saying something else. It dealt with Co-operation mathematically. Euclid could not go from one point to another in a shorter way. No delegate at the Congress could understand Co-operation better than the Canon ; he made a splendid plea for what is regarded as an essential principle of Co-operation—the recognition of labour in productive industry—the partnership of the worker with capital. The church was very crowded, and there was a large attendance of delegates.

The Tenth Congress, that of 1878, was held in Manchester, where great changes had occurred since the Congress of 1870. Balloon Street had come to represent a great European buying agency ; the Downing Street store had acquired some twelve branches, and the Congress of 1878 was more numerous and animated in proportion. On the Sunday before it opened, the Rev. W. N. Molesworth, of Rochdale, preached before the delegates at the Cathedral, augmenting the wise suggestions and friendly counsel by which co-operators had profited in their earlier career. The Rev. Mr. Steinthal also preached a sermon to us the same day. The Marquis of Ripon presided at the Congress, recalling the delegates to the duty of advancing the neglected department of production. We criticised with approval the Marquis's address. My defence was that it was our custom, as we regarded the Presidential address as Parliament does a royal speech, concerning which Canning said Parliament receives no communication which it does not echo, and it echoes nothing which it does not discuss. On the second day the Lord Bishop of Manchester presided, making one of those bright cheery addresses for which he was distinguished : showing real secular interest in co-operative things.

His religion, as is the characteristic of the religion of the gentleman, was never obtruded and never absent, being felt in every sentence, in the justice, candour, and sympathy shown towards those whose aims he discerned to be well intended, though they may have less knowledge, or other light than his, to guide them on their path. The Rev. Mr. Molesworth presided on one day as he had done at the Congress of 1870. Dr. John Watts was president on the last day, delivering an address marked by his unrivalled knowledge of co-operative business and policy, and that felicity of illustration whose light is drawn from the subject it illumines.

There was one who died during this Congress time, once a familiar name—Mr. George Alexander Fleming. Between 1835 and 1846 there was no Congress held at which he was not a principal figure. He was editor nearly all the time (thirteen years) of the *New Moral World*, a well-known predecessor of the *Co-operative News*. We used to make merry with his initials, "G. A. F.," but he was himself a practical, active agitator in the social cause. A border Scot by birth (being born at Berwick, Northumberland), he had the caution of his countrymen north of the Tweed; and though he showed zeal for social ideas, he had no adventurous sympathy with the outside life of the world; and Socialism had an aspect of sectarianism in his hands. He was an animated, vigorous speaker, and there was a business quality in his writings which did good service in his day. After he left the movement he soon made a place for himself in the world. Like many other able co-operators, he was not afraid of competition, and could hold his own amid the cunningest operators in that field. He took an engagement on the *Morning Advertiser*, and represented that paper in the gallery of the House of Commons until his death. He founded, or was chief promoter and conductor of, the *South London Press*. He first became known to the public as an eloquent speaker in the "Ten Hours' Bill" movement. All his life, to its close, he was a constant writer. Of late years he was well known to visitors at the Discussion Hall, in Shoe Lane, and the "Forum," in Fleet Street. He had reached seventy years of age, at which a man is called elderly. About a year before, he married a second time. He was buried at Nunhead.

Many years ago, at a dinner given at the Whittington Club to the chief Socialist advocates, he boasted, somewhat reproachfully, that he then obtained twice as much income for half the work he performed when connected with the social movement. But that was irrelevant, for the best advocates in that movement did not expect to serve themselves so much as to serve others. I have seen men die poor, and yet glad that they had been able to be of use to those who never even thought of requiting them. The consciousness of the good they had done in that way was the reward they most cared for. Mr. Fleming's merit was, that in the stormy and fighting days of the movement, he was one of the foremost men in the perilous fray, and therefore his name ought to be mentioned with regard in these pages. Like all public men who once belonged to the social movement, he was constantly found advocating and supporting, by wider knowledge than his mere political contemporaries possessed, liberty both of social life and social thought. I have often come upon unexpected instances in which he was true to old principles, and gave influence and argument to them, though quite out of sight of his old colleagues.

The hospitality to delegates commenced at Newcastle-on-Tyne has been a feature with variations at most subsequent Congresses, the chief stores being mainly the hosts of the delegates. In Bolton and in Leicester, as on the Tyneside and London, eminent friends of social effort among the people entertained many visitors.

The Central Board have published a considerable series of tracts, handbooks, special pamphlets, and lectures by co-operative writers, and sums of money every year are devoted to their gratuitous circulation. Any person wishing information upon the subject of Co-operation, or the formation of stores, or models of rules for the constitution of societies, can obtain them by applying to the Secretary of the Co-operative Union, Long Millgate, Manchester.

The sons of industry owe respect to the co-operators who preceded them. They furnished the knowledge by which we have profited. They had more than hope where others had despair. They saw progress where others saw nothing, and pointed to a path which industry had never

before trodden. The pioneers who have gone before have, like Marco Polo, or Columbus, or Sir Walter Raleigh, explored, so to speak, unknown seas of industry, have made maps of their course and records of their soundings. We know where the hidden rocks of enterprise lie, and the shoals and whirlpools of discord and disunity. We know what vortexes to avoid. The earlier and later movement has been one army though it carried no hostile flags. Its advocates were all members of one parliament, which, though several times prorogued, was never dissolved.

A movement is like a river. It percolates from an obscure source. It runs at best but deviously. It meets with an immovable obstacle and has to run round it. It makes its way where the soil is most pervious to water, and when it has travelled through a great extent of country, its windings sometimes bring it back to a spot which is not far in advance of its source. Eventually it trickles into unknown apertures which its own impetus and growing volume convert into a track. Though making countless circuits, it ever advances to the sea; though it appears to wander aimlessly through the earth, it is always proceeding; and its very length of way implies more distributed fertilisation on its course. So it is with human movements. A great principle has often a very humble source. It trickles at first slowly, uncertainly, and blindly. It moves through society as the river does through the land. It encounters understandings as impenetrable as granite, and has to find a passage through more impressionable minds; it digresses but never recedes. Like the currents which aid the river, principle has pioneers who make a way for it, who, if they cannot blast the rocks of stupidity, excavate the more intelligent strata of society. Though the way is long and lies through many a channel and maze, and though the new stream of thought seems to lose itself, the great current gathers unconscious force, new outlets seem to open of themselves, and in an unexpected hour the accumulated torrent of ideas bursts open a final passage to the great sea of truth.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

## THE FUTURE OF CO-OPERATION

"So with this earthly Paradise it is,  
 If ye will read aright, and pardon me,  
 Who strive to build a shadowy isle of bliss  
 Midmost the beating of the steely sea,  
 Where tossed about all hearts of men must be ;  
 Whose ravening monsters mighty men shall slay,  
 Not the poor singer of an empty day."

WILLIAM MORRIS, *The Earthly Paradise*.

To the reader I owe an apology for having detained him so long over a story upon which I have lingered myself several years. Imperious delays have beset me, until I have been like one driving a flock to market, who, having abandoned them for a time, has found difficulty in re-collecting them. No doubt I have lost some, and have probably driven up some belonging to other persons, without being aware of the illicit admixture.

Mr. Morris's lines, prefixed to this chapter, are not applicable to the story of labour seeking rights. For myself I am no "singer," nor do I believe in the "empty day" which the poet modestly suggests. No day is "empty" which contains a poet. Nevertheless, I am persuaded that "the isle of bliss" will yet arise "midmost the beatings of the steely sea," and that the "ravening monsters," industrial and otherwise, which now intimidate society, "mighty men" will one day "slay."

Society is improved by a thousand agencies. I only contend that Co-operation is one. Co-operation, I repeat, is the new force of industry which attains competency without mendicancy, and effaces inequality by equalising fortunes. The equality contemplated is not that of men who aim to be



equal to their superiors and superior to their equals. The simple equality it seeks consists in the diffusion of the means of general competence, until every family is insured against dependence or want, and no man in old age, however unfortunate or unthrifty he may have been, shall stumble into pauperism. His want of sense, or want of thrift, may rob him of repute or power, but shall never sink him so low that crime shall be justifiable, or his fate a scandal to any one save himself. The road to this state of things is long, but at the end lies the pleasant Valley of Competence.

There is no equality in nature, of strength or stature, of taste or knowledge, or force or faculty. Many may row in the same boat, but, as Jerrold said, not with the same oars. But there may be equivalence, though not equality in power: the sum of one man's powers may be equal to another's if we knew how to measure the degrees of their diversity. It is in equality of opportunity of developing the qualities for good each man is endowed with, that is the immediate need of mankind.

Machinery has become a power as great as though 100 millions of giants had entered Great Britain to work for its people. And these giants never feel hunger, or passion, or weariness, and their power is immeasurable. Yet the lot of the poor is precarious, and the very poor amount to millions. Yet somehow the giants have not worked adequately for the many as yet. It is true that a higher scale of life is reached by the poorer sort than of old; still they are but the servants of capital, and are hired. Co-operation opens the door to partnership.

When "Distribution shall undo excess and each man has enough" for secure existence, the baser incentives to greed, fraud, and violence will cease. The social outrages, the coarseness of life, at which we are shocked, were once thought to be inevitable. Our being shocked at them now is a sign of progress. The steps of society are—(1) Savagery; (2) The mastership by chiefs of the ferocious; (3) The government of ferocity tempered by rude lawfulness; (4) Rude lawfulness matured into a general right of protection; (5) Protection insured by political representation; (6) Ascendancy of the people diminishing the arrogance and espionage of

government ; (7) Self-control matured into self-support ; when the philanthropist becomes merely ornamental and charity and disease unnecessary evils. We are far from that state yet ; but Co-operation is the most likely thing apparent to accelerate the march to it.

Sir Arthur Helps has told the public that "what Socialists are always aiming at is paternal government, under which they are to be spoilt children." Sir Arthur must have in his mind State Socialists—very different persons from co-operators, who are Next Step takers.

The co-operative form of progress is the organisation of self-help, in which the industrious do everything, and devise that order of things in which it shall be impossible for honest men to be idle or ignorant, depraved or poor : in which self-help supersedes patronage and paternalism.

Co-operation has been retarded by a spurious order of "practical" men. These kind of people would have stopped the creation of the world on the second day on the ground that it was no use going on. Had the law of gravitation been explained to them, they would have passed an unanimous resolution to the effect that it was "impracticable." Had the solar system been floated by a company they would not have taken a share in it, being perfectly sure it could never be made to work ; or if it were started they would have assured us the planets would never keep time. Were the sun to be discovered for the first time to-day they would not look at it, but declare it could never be turned to any useful account, and discourage investments in it, lest it should divert capital from the more important and more practical candle movement. Had these people been told before they were born that they would be "fearfully and wonderfully made"—that the human frame would be very complicated—they would have been afraid to exist. They would have looked at the nice adjustment of a thousand parts necessary to life, and they would have declared it impossible to live.

The hopeless tone of many of the working class has been changed by Co-operation. An artisan begins to see that he is a member of the Order of Industry, which ought to be the frankest, boldest, most self-reliant of all "Orders." The Order of Thinkers are pioneers—the Order of Workmen

are conquerors. They subjugate Nature and turn the dreams of thought into realities of life. Why, then, should not a workman always think and speak with evident consciousness of the dignity of his own order, and as one careful for its reputation? It is absurd to see the sovereign people with a perpetual handkerchief at its eyes, and a constant hat in its hands. The sovereign people should neither whine nor beg. A workman having English blood in his veins should have some dignity in his manner. More is expected from him than from the manacled negro, who could only put up his hands and cry, "Am I not a man and a brother?" The English artisan ought to be a man whether a "brother or not." I hate the people who wail. Either their lot is not improvable, or it is. If it be not improvable, wailing is weakness: if it be improvable, wailing is cowardice.

When I first entered the social agitation long years ago, competition was a chopping-machine and the poor were always under the knife. If an employer had a reasonable regard for the welfare of the operatives engaged by him, his manner was hard (as still is the manner of many), and never indicated good feeling. He lacked that sympathy the want of which the late Justice Talfourd said, was the great defect of the master class in England. The master at best seemed to regard his men as a flock of wayward sheep, and himself as a sheep-dog. He indeed kept the wolf from their door, but they were not sensible of the service, because he bit them when they turned aside. Owing to this cause creditable kindness when displayed was not discerned. At no time in my youth do I remember to have heard any expression which indicated esteem on the part of the employed towards their employers; and when I listened to the conversation of workmen in foundries and factories in the same town, or to that of workmen who came from distant places, it appeared that this state of feeling was general. The men regarded their masters as commercial weasels who slept with one eye open, in order to see whether they neglected their work. Employers looked upon their men as clocks which would not go, or which if they did were right only once in twenty-four hours; and that not through any virtue of their own, but because the right time came round to them.

Employers now, as a rule, have more friendliness of manner. Factory legislation has done much to improve the comfort of workshops and limit the labour of children and women. Farm legislation will come, and do something to the same effect for agricultural working people. Besides these, consideration, taste, and pride in employers have done more. The warehouses of great towns are less hideous to look upon by the townspeople and less dreary to work in. Workshops are in many places opulent and lofty, and are palaces of labour compared with the penitentiary structures which deformed the streets and high-roads generations ago. The old charnel-houses of industry are being everywhere superseded. Light, air, some grim kind of grace, make the workman's days healthier and pleasanter; and conveniences for his comfort and even education, never thought of formerly, are often supplied now. The stores and mills erected by co-operators show that they have set their faces against the architects or ugliness, and the new standard can never go back among employers of greater pretensions.

Under the self-supporting example of the common people the better classes may be expected to improve. The working class will be no more told to look to frugality alone as their means of competence. "Frugality" is oft the fair-sounding term in which the counsel of privation is disguised to the poor. We shall see the opulent advised to practise the wholesome virtue of frugality (good for all conditions). They might then live on much less than they now expend. There then would remain an immense surplus, available for the public service, since the provident wealthy would not want it. Advice cannot much longer be given to the people which is never taken by those who offer it, and which is intended to reconcile the many to an indefensible and unnecessary inequality.

The unrest of competition produces disastrous consequences in diseases which strike down the most energetic men by day and night, without warning. Some quieter method of progress will be wished for and be welcomed. In the old times when none could read, save the priest and a few peers, learning was a passion, and the thoughtful monk, who had no worldly care or want, toiled in his cell from the pure love of study, and



carried on the thought of the world as Bruno did, with no spur, save that supplied by genius and the love of truth. Now the printing-press has called into activity the intellect of mankind—ambition and emulation, industry and discovery, invention and art, will proceed by the natural force of thought, however Co-operation may prevail. Indeed, Co-operation may facilitate them. If Peace hath her victories as well as War—which a poet was first to see—concert in life has its million devices, activities, and inspirations. The world will not be mute, nor men idle, because the brutal goad of competition no longer pricks them on to activity. The future will not be less brilliant than the past, because its background is contentment instead of misery.

People who say that the world would come to a standstill were it not for the pressure of hunger and poverty, and that we should all be idle were we not judiciously starved, should spend five minutes in the study of the ceaseless, joyous, and gratuitous activity of the first Lord Lytton. Of high lineage, of good fortune, of capacity which understood life without effort, occupying a position which commanded deference, and of personal qualities which secured him friends, he had only to live to be distinguished, yet this man, as baronet and peer, worked as many hours of his own will as any mechanic in the land, and of his own natural love of activity created for the world more pleasant reading than all the House of Lords put together, save Macaulay.

The present casts its light of change some distance before, and the near future can be discerned—Co-operation bids fair to clear the sight of the industrial class as to what they can do for themselves.

Men as a rule have not half the brains of bees. Bees respect only those who contribute to the common store, they keep no terms with drones, but drag them out and make short work with them. Men suffer the drones to become kings of the hive, and pay them homage. Co-operators of the earliest type set their faces against uselessness. With all their sentimentality they kept no place for drones. They did not mean to be mendicants themselves nor to have mendicants in their ranks. They had no plan either of indoor or outdoor relief for them. The first number of the *Co-operative Magazine* for 1826 made



its first condition of happiness to consist in "occupation." Avoidable dependence will come to be deemed ignominious. As wild beasts retreat before the march of civilisation, so pauperism will retreat before the march of co-operative industry. Pauperism will be put down as the infamy of industry. A million paupers—a vast standing army of mendicants—in the midst of the working class—is a reproach to every workman now. Workmen will learn to clear their way, and pay their way, as the middle-class have learned to do. Every law which deprives industry of a fair chance, or facilitates the accumulation of immense fortunes, and checks the equitable distribution of property, will be stopped, as far as legitimate legislation can stop it. Not long since a politician so experienced as Louis Blanc made a great speech in Paris, in which he said, "Most frankly he admitted that the problem of the extinction of pauperism, which he believed possible, was too vast and complicated to be treated without modesty and prudence, and he would even add, doubt." In our English Parliament I have heard ministers use similar language, without seeming aware that no legislature would extinguish pauperism if it could. If the proposal was seriously made, on every bench in the House of Commons, peer and squire and manufacturer would jump up in dismay and apprehension. The sudden "extinction of pauperism" would produce consternation in town and county throughout the land. Were there no paupers there would be no poor. Nobody would be dependent, service of the humble kind that now ministers to ostentatious opulence would cease. The pride, power, and influence that comes from almsgiving would end. In England, as in America, the "servant" would disappear and in his place would arise a new class, limited and costly, who would only engage themselves as "helpers" and equals. Besides, there would be in Great Britain opposition among the paupers themselves. The majority of them do not want to be abolished. They have been reared under the impression that they have a vested interest in charity—humiliation sits easy upon them. It is not Acts of Parliament that can do much to alter this, it is the means of self-help which alone can bring it to pass.

At a public meeting in the metropolis, some years ago,

Prince Albert was one of the speakers, and he was on the occasion surrounded by many noblemen. The subject of his speech was improvement in the condition of the indigent. The Prince, looking around him at the wealthy lords on the platform, and to some poor men in the meeting, said, very gracefully, "We," looking again at a duke near him, "to whom Providence has given rank, wealth, and education, ought to do what lies in our power for the less fortunate." This was very generous of the Prince, but men look now for a surer deliverance. Providence was not the benefactor of princes and dukes. He gave them no possessions. They got them in a very different way. The wealth of nature is given to all, not to the few, and Co-operation furnishes means of attaining it to all who have honesty, sense, and unity.

Nothing is more astounding to students of industrial progress than to observe among commercial men and politicians the utter absence of any idea of distribution of gains among the people. The only concern is that the capitalist or the individual dealer shall profit. It is nobody's concern that the community should profit. It is nobody's idea that everybody should profit by what man's genius creates. It does not enter into any mind that disproportionate wealth is an aggressive accumulation of means in the hands of a few which ought to be, as far as possible, diffusible in equity among all for mutual protection. The feudalism of capital is as dangerous as that of arms.

It was stated by the editor of the *Co-operative Magazine* in 1826, in very explicit terms, that "Mr. Owen does not propose that the rich should give up their property to the poor; but that the poor should be placed in such a situation as would enable them to create *new wealth* for themselves."<sup>1</sup> This is what Co-operation is intended to do, and this, let us hope, it will do.

The instinct of Co-operation is self-help. Only men of independent spirit are attracted by it. The intention of the co-operator has been never to depend upon parliamentary consideration for help, nor upon the sympathy of the rich for charity, nor upon pity nor the prayer of the priest. The co-operator may be a believer, and generally is, but he is self-reliant in the first place, and a believer in the second. Pity is

<sup>1</sup> *Co-operative Magazine*, No. 1, January, 1826, p. 31.

out of his way, because he does not like to distress people to give it. Help by prayer is the most compendious and easy way of getting it, but the co-operator, who is generally a modest man, does not like to give the priest the trouble of procuring it, whose machinery seems never in order when it is most wanted to work. When the working class have learnt the lesson of self-support and self-protection there may be piety and devotion and the love of God among them, but they will owe their fortunes to themselves. Co-operators know, however excellent faith may be, it is not business. No trades union can obtain an increase of wages by faith. No employer will give a man a good engagement in consideration of what he believes. His chances entirely depend on what he can do. The most celebrated manufacturing firm would be ruined in repute if the twelve apostles worked for it, unless they knew their business. Piety, ever so conspicuous, fetches no price in the labour market. There is no creed the profession of which will induce a Chancellor of the Exchequer to remit the assessed taxes, or a magistrate to excuse the non-payment of local rates. People have been misled by the well-intentioned but mischievous lesson which has taught them to employ mendicant supplication to Heaven. When the evil day comes—when the parent has no means of supporting his family or discharging his duty as a citizen—the Churches render no help, the State admits of no excuse : it accords nothing but the contemptuous charity of the poor law. The day of self-help has come, and this will be the complexion of the future.

Co-operation, in imparting the power of self-help, abates that distrust which has kept the people down. Above all projects of our day co-operative industry has mitigated the wholesale suspicion of riches and capitalists. This means good understanding in the future between those who have saved money, and the many who need to save it, and mean to save it. The old imbecility of poverty is disappearing. The incapacitating objection to paying interest for money is scarcely visible anywhere. What does it matter how rich another grows, whether he be capitalist or employer, whether he be called master or millionaire, providing he who is poor can contrive to attain competence by his own aid? Jealousy or distrust of another's success is only justifiable when he bars the

way to those below him, equally entitled to a reasonable chance of rising. War upon the rich is only lawful when, not content with their own good fortune, they close every door upon the poor, give no heed to their just claims, deny them, whether by law or combination, fair means of self-help, discouraging the honest, the industrious, and the thrifty from ascending the ladder of prosperity on which they have mounted. Property has no rights in equity when it owns no obligation of justice, and ceases to be considerate to others. If the wealthy proposed to kill the indigent, they would provoke a war in which the slain would not be all on one side ; and since the powerful must consent to the weak existing, that consent implies the right of the weak to live, and the right to live includes the right to a certain share of the wealth of the community, proportionate to the labour and skill they contribute in creating it. Property has to provide for this or must permit it to be provided by others, or it will be itself in jeopardy. The power of creating a pacifying distribution of means is afforded by practical Co-operation. As I have said, it asks no aid from the State ; it petitions for no gift, disturbs no interests, attacks nobody's fortune, attempts no confiscation of existing gains, but clears its own ground, gathers in its own harvest, distributes the golden grain equitably among all the husbandmen. Without needing favours or incurring obligations, it establishes the industrious classes among the possessors of the fruits of the earth. As the power of self-existence in nature includes all other attributes, so self-help in the people includes all the conditions of progress. Co-operation is organised self-help—that is what the complexion of the future will be.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

## AN OUTSIDE CHAPTER

**Reply to "Fraser's Magazine."**—The only notice of my first volume to which I desire to reply is one which Professor Newman did me the honour to make in *Fraser*.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Newman was alike incapable of being unfair or unjust, and to me he had been neither, but he had misconceived what I had said about State Socialism and capitalists. I blame no one who misconceives my word—I blame myself. It is the duty of a writer to be so clear that obtuseness cannot misapprehend him nor malice pervert what he says. Mr. Newman was neither obtuse nor malicious. Few men saw so clearly as he into social questions, or were so considerate as he in his objections. He scrupulously said I had, "unawares" and "inconsistently" with my known views, fallen into errors. Mr. Newman did me the honour to remember that I try with what capacity I have not to be foolish, and that I regard unfairness and even inaccuracy of statement as of the nature of a crime against truth.

I quoted the edict of Babeuf (p. 25, vol. i.), "That they do nothing for the country who do not serve it by some useful occupation," to show that the most extreme communists kept no terms either with "laziness or plunder"—the two sins usually charged against these theorists. From this Mr. Newman concluded that I would deny persons the right to enjoy inherited property. Writers on property are accustomed to enumerate but three ways of acquiring it—namely, to earn it, to beg it, or to steal it. Mr. Newman's sagacity enabled him to

<sup>1</sup> *Fraser's Magazine*, December, 1875.



point out a fourth way—persons may inherit it. I confess this did not occur to me, nor did I ask myself whether Babeuf thought of it. I took his edict to apply only to persons for whose welfare the State made itself responsible. It was in this sense only that I thought it right that all should be “usefully occupied.”

Mr. Newman said, “I would fain pass off” Mr. Owen’s administration of the New Lanark Mills “as Co-operation.” Surely I would not. Mr. Newman said, “Mr. Owen patronised the workman.” Certainly—that is exactly what he did, and this is what I do not like. It was at best but a good sort of despotism, and had the merit of being better than the bad sort. He proved that equity, though paternally conceded, *paid*, which no manufacturer had made publicly clear before.

One who has not written on this subject, Mr. John Bright, but who is as famous for his familiarity with it, as for his readiness in repartee, said to me, “There is one thing in your book to which I object—you speak of the tyranny of capital.” “But it was not in my mind,” I rejoined. “But it is in your book,” was the answer. No reply could be more conclusive. Capital may be put to tyrannical uses; but capital itself is the independent, passionless means of all material progress. It is only its misuse against which we have to provide, and I ought to have been careful to have said so.

For State Socialism I have less than sympathy, I have dislike. Lassalle and Marx, of the same race, Comte and Napoleon III. are all identifiable by one sign—they ridicule the dwarfish efforts of the slaves of wages to transform capitalistic society. Like the Emperor of the French, they overflow with what seems eloquent sympathy for helpless workmen ground to powder in the mill of capital. They all mean that the State will grind them in a more benevolent way of its own, if working men will abjure politics, and submit themselves to the paternal operators who alone know what is best for them.

There was a German Disraeli—namely, Prince Bismarck—who befriended the German Jew as Lord Derby did the English one. It was Ferdinand Lassalle, handsome, unscrupulous, a dandy with boundless bounce; a Sybarite in his life, beaming in velvet, jewellery, and curly hair, who affected to be the friend of the working class. Deserting the party to

which he belonged for not appreciating him, he turned against it, and conceived the idea of organising German workmen as a political force to oppose the middle class, exactly as the Chartists were used in England. Lassalle's language to the working men was that "they could not benefit themselves by frugality or saving—the cruel, brazen law of wages made individual exertion unavailing—their only trust was in State help." With all who disliked exertion Lassalle was popular; for there were German Jingoës in his day. By dress and parade he kept himself distinguished, and also obtained an annuity from a Countess who much exceeded his age. The author of "*Vivian Grey*" was distanced by Lassalle, who told the world that "he wrote his pamphlets armed with all the culture of his century." In other respects he showed less skill than his English rival. Mr. Disraeli insulted O'Connell whom it was known would not fight a duel, and then challenged his son Morgan, whom he had not insulted, and who declined to fight until he was. Disraeli prudently did not qualify him. Lassalle, less weary, discerned no discretionary course, and Count Rackonitz shot him, otherwise Bismarck would have been superseded at the Berlin Congress, and a German Beaconsfield had been President. In blood, religion, and policy, in manners and ambition, and in success (save in duelling) both men were the same. Our Conservative Lassalle had an incubator of State Socialism for this country and the Young England party came out of it.

**Co-operative Methods in 1828.**—In 1828, when Lord John Russell was laying the foundation-stone of the British Schools in Brighton, Dr. King was writing to Lord Brougham, then Henry Brougham, M.P., an account of the then new scheme of Co-operative Stores. It is a practical, well-written appeal to a statesman, and enables us to see what Brougham had the means of knowing at that early period of the nature of Co-operation as a new social force. The following is Dr. King's statement:—

"A number of persons in Brighton, chiefly of the working class, having read works on the subject of Co-operation, conceived the possibility of reducing it to practice in some shape or other. They accordingly formed themselves into a society,

and met once a week for reading and conversation on the subject; they also began a weekly subscription of 1d. The numbers who joined were considerable—at one time upwards of 170; but, as happens in such cases, many were lukewarm and indifferent, and the numbers fluctuated. Those who remained showed at once an evident improvement of their minds. When the subscriptions amounted to £5 the sum was invested in groceries, which were retailed to the members. Business kept increasing, the first week the amount sold was half-a-crown; it is now about £38. The profit is about 10 per cent.; so that a return of £20 a week pays all expenses, besides which the members have a large room to meet in and work in. About six months ago the society took a lease of twenty-eight acres of land, about nine miles from Brighton, which they cultivate as a garden and nursery out of their surplus capital. They employ on the garden, out of seventy-five members, four, and sometimes five men, with their own capital. They pay the men at the garden 14s. a week, the ordinary rate of wages in the country being 10s., and of parish labourers 6s. The men are also allowed rent and vegetables. They take their meals together. One man is married and his wife is housekeeper.

“The principle of the society is—the value of labour. The operation is by means of a common capital. An individual capital is an impossibility to the workman, but a common capital not. The advantage of the plan is that of mutual insurance; but there is an advantage beyond, viz., that the workman will thus get the whole produce of his labour to himself; and if he chooses to work harder or longer, he will benefit in proportion. If it is possible for men to work for themselves, many advantages will arise. The other day they wanted a certain quantity of land planted before the winter. Thirteen members went from Brighton early in the morning, gave a day’s work, performed the task, and returned home at night. The man who formerly had the land, when he came to market, allowed himself 10s. to spend. The man who now comes to market for the society is contented with 1s. extra wages. Thus these men are in a fair way to accumulate capital enough to find all the members with constant employment; and of course the capital will not stop there. Other

societies are springing up. Those at Worthing and Finden are proceeding as prosperously as ours, only on a smaller scale. If Co-operation be once proved practicable, the working classes will soon see their interest in adopting it. If this goes on, it will draw labour from the market, raise wages, and so operate upon pauperism and crime. All this is pounds, shillings, and pence ; but another most important feature remains. The members see immediately the value of knowledge. They employ their leisure time in reading and mutual instruction. They have appointed one of their members librarian and schoolmaster ; he teaches every evening. Even their discussions involve both practice and theory, and are of a most improving nature. Their feelings are of an enlarged, liberal, and charitable description. They have no disputes, and feel towards mankind at large as brethren. The *élite* of the society were members of the Mechanics' Institution, and my pupils, and their minds were no doubt prepared there for this society. It is a happy consummation.

“In conclusion, I beg to propose to your great and philanthropic mind the question as to how such societies may be affected by the present state of the law ; or how far future laws may be so framed as to operate favourably to them. At the same time, they ask nothing from any one but to be let alone, and nothing from the law but protection. As I have had the opportunity of watching every step of this society, I consider their case proved ; but others at a distance will want further experience. If the case is proved, I consider it due to you, sir, as a legislator, philosopher, and the friend of man, to lay it before you. This society will afford you additional motives for completing the Library of Useful Knowledge—the great forerunner of human improvement.”

**The First Sales of the Rochdale Pioneers.**—In 1866, when Mr. Samuel Ashworth left the Rochdale store to manage the Manchester Wholesale Society, a presentation was made to him in the Board Room of the Corn Mill. A correspondent of the *Working Man* sent to me at the time these particulars, not published save in that journal. In the course of the proceedings Mr. William Cooper related how he and Samuel Ashworth were among the first persons who served customers in



the store in Toad Lane, when it was opened in 1844 for sales of articles in the grocery business. "We then," said Mr. Cooper, "sold goods at the store about two nights in the week, opening at about eight o'clock p.m., and closing in two hours after. Mr. Ashworth served in the shop one week, and I the week following. We gave our services for the first three months, except that the committee bought each of us a pair of white sleeves—something like butchers wear on their arms, to make us look tidy and clean, and, if the truth is to be owned, I daresay they were to cover the grease which stuck to and shone upon our jacket sleeves as woollen weavers. At that time every member that worked for the store, whether as secretary, treasurer, purchaser, or auditor, did it for the good of the society, without any reward in wages or salary.

"When Samuel Ashworth joined the society, in 1844, he was only nineteen years of age. He was behind the counter on December 21, 1844, that memorable day when the shutters were first taken down from the shop-front in Toad Lane, and was one of those stared at by every passer-by. The stock with which the co-operators opened the shop was as follows: 1 qr. 22 lb. of butter, 2 qrs. of sugar, 3 sacks of flour at 37s. 6d., and 3 sacks at 36s., 2 dozen of candles, and 1 sack of meal. The total cost of this stock was £16 11s. 11d.; and it appeared they must have had a fortnight's stock of flour, for there was none bought the second week. The second week the stock was slightly decreased, the amount of purchases for the fortnight being £24 14s. 7d."

Those goods Samuel Ashworth and William Cooper had the pleasure of selling as unpaid shopkeepers—"a bad precedent," remarked Mr. Ashworth, in the course of a speech made by him, "because even now some of their members do not like to pay their servants the best of wages." It is instructive to compare the difference between the weekly sale of goods during the first fortnight of the society's existence, and their weekly sales twelve years later:—

Weekly Sales in 1844.				Weekly Sales in 1856.	
Butter	...	...	50 lb.	...	220 firkins, or 15,400 lb.
Sugar	...	...	40 lb.	...	170 cwt., or 19,040 lb.
Flour	...	...	3 sacks	...	468 sacks.
Soap	...	...	56 lb.	...	2 tons 13 cwt., or 5,936 lb.



Subsequently, when the price of sugar was rapidly rising, Mr. Ashworth ordered 50 tons of sugar in three days, and on another occasion he gave an order for 4,000 sacks of flour at once. The weekly receipts during the first fortnight of the society's operations did not average £10, twelve years later, in 1866, the weekly sales were £4,822.

**The End of the Orbiston Community.**—The most interesting and authentic account of Orbiston, its objects, principles, financial arrangements, and end, is that given in the newspapers of 1829 and 1830. The following appeared under the head of "Law Intelligence—Vice Chancellor's Court"—*JONES v. MORGAN AND OTHERS*—**THE SOCIALISTS.**—This case came before the court upon the demurrer of a lady, named Rathbone, put in to a Bill filed by several shareholders of the Orbiston Company, on the ground that such shareholders had contributed more than was justly due from them, and to recover the excess. The grounds of the demurrers were want of equity. The case came before the court upon the demurrer of a person named Cooper. The facts appeared to be these: In the year 1825 a number of persons joined together, for the purpose of forming a socialist or communist society, under the superintendence of Mr. Robert Owen, the professed object of which was to promote the happiness of mankind. The company was to consist of shareholders, the shares being fixed at £250 (though after the formation of the company they were reduced to £200 each), and it being further agreed that for the first year no shareholder should be allowed to hold more than ten shares, but that after the lapse of one year from the formation of the society, such stock as should then be unappropriated might be disposed of among the members of the company. The capital was not to exceed £50,000. The company eventually purchased 280 acres of land from General Hamilton, at Orbiston, in Scotland, as the site of the proposed establishment, for which they consented to pay £19,995. This money was borrowed in three several sums of £12,000 from the Union Scotch Assurance Company, £3,000 from a Mr. Ainslie, and the remainder from another quarter. The articles of agreement were then drawn up. The right of voting was to be vested in the shareholders proportionately to

the amount of their respective shares. The necessary buildings were to be erected, and the necessary utensils supplied, and the company were to be empowered to borrow money upon the security of the joint property. Several trustees were named, the first being a Mr. Combe, to whom the estate was accordingly conveyed. The following are some of the general articles agreed on: "Whereas the assertion of Robert Owen, who has had much experience in the education of children, that principles as certain as the science of mathematics may be applied to the forming any general character, and that by the influence of other circumstances not a few individuals only, but the population of the whole world, may in a few years be rendered a very far superior race of beings to any now on the face of the earth, or who have ever existed, an assertion which implies that at least nine-tenths of the crime and misery which exist in the world have been the necessary consequence of errors in the present system of instruction, and not of imperfection implanted in our nature by the Creator, and that it is quite practical to form the minds of all children that are born so that at the age of twelve years their habits and ideas shall be far superior to those of the individuals termed learned men. . . . And that under a proper direction of manual labour Great Britain and its dependencies may be made to support an incalculable increase of population." The 21st article provided for a dissolution of the society if it should be found necessary: "That if, unhappily, experience should demonstrate to the satisfaction of the majority of proprietors that the new system introduced and recommended by R. Owen has a tendency to produce, in the aggregate, as much ignorance in the midst of knowledge, as much poverty in the midst of excessive wealth, as much illiberality and hypocrisy, as much overbearing and cruelty, and fawning and severity, as much ignorant conceit, as much dissipation and debauchery, as much filthiness and brutality, as much avarice and unfeeling selfishness, as much fraud and dishonesty, as much discord and violence, as have invariably attended the existing system in all ages, then shall the property be let to individuals acting under the old system, or sold to defray the expenses of the institution." In 1825 the society entered upon the estate, and the lands were divided among the tenants.

Among the original shareholders was the present demurring defendant, Cooper, who took one share, for which he paid £20 as an instalment, that he had borrowed from Mr. Hamilton, on the understanding that unless the loan were repaid by Cooper within two years, the property should belong to Mr. Hamilton. At the several meetings that subsequently took place Cooper did not attend, but deputed the trustee, Mr. Combe, to act for him, as he was permitted to do by the original agreement. In 1827 it was ascertained that the speculation did not answer, as the company was proved to be involved in debt to a considerable amount, so as to make it necessary that the property should be sold and the establishment broken up. Accordingly, in 1828, the sale of the estate was effected, and £15,000, the purchase-money, subject to certain deductions, transferred to the Scotch Assurance Company, as a repayment of their loan. A considerable balance of debts to other parties, however, still remained due, for which the shareholders became liable. Several suits were prepared in Scotch courts, during which the estates of the shareholders were declared liable, and several accordingly had paid much beyond what was due, proportionately on the amount of their shares. Of the original shareholders many were now dead, many out of the jurisdiction of the court, and many in hopelessly insolvent circumstances.—Mr. Rolt appeared in support of the demurrer.—In consequence of the absence of Mr. James Parker, who was engaged in the Lord Chancellor's Court, the further arguments were ordered to stand over. The "further arguments" I have not been able to procure.

**The End of the Queenwood Community.**—The reader has seen in the chapter on "Lost Communities" the closing days of Queenwood. Twenty years after, in 1865, a suit in Chancery being instituted, the property was sold and the assets distributed.

After paying the expenses allowed by the court and one creditor, who was held to be entitled to be paid in full to the extent of £15 10s. 10d., there remained for division £6,226 19s. 5d. amongst the several persons in the proportions hereunder mentioned.

All those who had to receive less than £10 obtained it from Messrs. Ashurst, Morris & Co., of 6, Old Jury, London ; those whose dividends exceeded £10 received payment from the Accountant-General, on being identified by a solicitor upon such application.

The following is a list of the persons and amounts payable to them ;—

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Joseph Craven and				Lees, Robert ...	16	6	4
Mary Craven ...	16	7	8	Matthison, Robert ...	8	3	2
Ann Craven ...	20	10	1	Meadowcroft, William	3	16	8
Green, Charles F. ...	11	13	6	Milson, John ...	2	0	9
Pare, William ...	191	17	5	Mellalieu, William ...	2	0	9
William Pare... ..	2,679	14	5	Messider, Isaac ...	0	8	2
Galpin, Thomas D. ...	1,020	15	3	Miller, Trusty ...	3	13	4
Travis, Henry ...	205	1	0	Paterson, Robert ...	3	16	4
Trevelyan, Arthur ...	41	0	2	Perry, James ...	6	2	4
Barton, J. W....	82	0	2	Pilling, Andrew ...	3	12	7
Robinson, Thomas ...	4	19	4	Plant, James ...	2	0	9
Sutton, James W. ...	38	19	2	Punter, William ...	21	12	4
Scoular, William ...	4	2	0	Rhodes, William ...	0	8	2
Russell, Wallace ...	4	2	0	Rhodes, William ...	1	12	7
Stapleton, Joseph G....	1	8	4	Richard, James H. ...	11	6	6
Smith, Thomas ...	57	17	0	Richard, James H. ...	11	6	6
Tolmee, William F....	16	8	0	Rose, William ...	1	12	7
Marchant, Thomas F.	61	9	10	Rose, William ...	8	3	2
Marchant, Elizabeth	2	9	2	Sturzaker, John ...	12	4	9
Dornbusch, George ...	55	7	2	Sturzaker, Elizabeth	4	1	7
Banton, William ...	0	8	2	Trustees of Social Re-			
Barnes, John ...	2	1	0	formers' Benefit Society	20	9	7
Bartlett, William ...	19	4	9	Sturges, John... ..	26	12	8
Barton, Charles ...	4	2	0	Smithies, James ...	5	14	10
Beveridge, William S.	20	9	6	Simpson, George ...	16	16	6
Betram, James ...	2	1	0	Simpson, Thomas ...	5	6	9
Berwick, John ...	4	1	10	Tapping, James ...	19	4	0
Bracker, George ...	574	1	4	Tiffin, Charles ...	2	1	0
Buxton, John ...	20	9	6	Walker, George ...	2	1	0
Clement, Charles ...	0	8	2	Wilson, Thomas ...	18	8	8
Collier, John ...	3	5	7	Whiteley, John ...	69	3	9
Dean, Hannah ...	4	2	0	Watterson, William...	2	17	6
Dean, Mary A. ...	4	2	0	Wolfenden, Betsy ...	2	1	0
Duly, Thos. & Mary A.	8	12	4	Wolfenden, William	1	4	6
Farn, J. C. ...	6	2	10	Webley, John ...	3	13	2
Garside, John G. ...	8	12	3	Whitehead, John ...	0	8	2
Gooding, James ...	5	14	2	Thomasson, Thomas	8	4	0
Green, James... ..	8	3	10	Mitchell, Samuel ...	0	12	4
Hardy, Charles ...	2	18	6	Pearson, Charles, Ex-			
McHugh, Sarah ...	27	16	6	ecutor of Elizabeth			
Holloway, James H....	0	16	4	Pearson ... ..	86	0	10
Holliday, John H. ...	0	8	2	Pearson, Charles, Ad-			
Howard, Samuel ...	1	16	0	ministratorofAmelia			
Howard, Ashton ...	1	16	0	Pearson ... ..	86	0	10
Ironsides, Isaac ...	1	12	8	Gurney, John... ..	0	8	2
Jackson, John ...	28	18	7	Carr, John ... ..	19	19	8
Jackson, William ...	8	3	10	Trustees of the Hall of			
Jervis, James ...	4	1	6	Science Building			
Lauton, William ...	10	3	11	Society ... ..	12	6	5



	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Boyce, James...	6	8	2	Ardhill, John...	41	4	0
Browne, John ...	6	10	8	The Trustees of			
Healey, George ...	7	4	0	Lodge No. 201 of the			
Harrison, Francis ...	2	9	2	Order of Free			
Samuel, George W....	20	9	7	Gardeners ...	4	17	0
Lees, Thomas P. ...	8	4	0	Lamb, Lewis... ..	1	19	6
Palmer, Edward ...	6	3	0	Batt, Philip; Whitely,			
Robinson, Samuel ...	4	2	0	Thomas; & Robin-			
Smith, Samuel ...	2	0	9	son, John, Executors			
Truelove, Edward ...	8	11	3	of Hirstwood, R. ...	10	4	4
Black, Richard H. ...	265	11	0	Ramdens, William ...	0	16	6
The Trustee of the				Shepherd, Samuel ...	1	4	8
Good Samaritan				Lees, Edward ...	0	8	2
Lodge of Odd							
Fellows of Man-							
chester Union,							
Lodge 1337 ...	12	9	0				
					£6,226	19	5

The expenses incurred by Mr. Pare in carrying out this suit amounted to £360. The suits were conducted by Mr. George Davis of Mr. Ashurst's firm, and it was owing to his skill, resource, and mastery of the case that the money recovered reached so large an amount. The defaulting trustees endeavoured to defame the principles of Mr. Owen, and to prejudice the Master of the Rolls against the case; it was a matter of justice that they should be defeated. Sir John Romilly exceeded all that was to be expected of any judge, and he refused to allow the trustees to escape by these means, which in days not then long gone would have been successful. Mr. Davis's control of the case was surrounded with difficulties which would have deterred many solicitors, and placed the creditors who benefited by his judgment and success under great obligation to him.

**Reciprocity in Shopkeeping.**—Often contending that it was in the power of shopkeepers of wit to apply Co-operation to their own business, I wrote a circular for a Glasgow tea merchant, who had a large establishment at 508, Gallowgate, who preferred candour and business explicitness, setting forth the new method of dealing. Being the first document of the kind, it may be instructive to tradesmen. Mr. John McKenzie, the tea merchant in question, thus introduced the principle of Reciprocity:—

“Every one, whether he has been in business or not, knows that the natural competition of trade keeps the shopkeeper's profits low; and if he makes any gift to his customers upon small purchases, he must be a loser by it. If, therefore, a



customer is offered such gifts, he has good reason to suppose that the articles he buys are inferior to what they ought to be, and if he does suppose it, he will commonly be right.

“The only way in which profits can be made in business is by numerous customers, and consequently large sales, which enable the shopkeeper to buy in the best markets. It is by this reciprocity alone that profit can arise which can be divided with purchasers. Therefore, if customers make purchases to the necessary amount, a real reciprocal plan of giving dividends on purchases can be carried out.

“The tea trade is one of the best fitted of any business for applying this reciprocity principle, and we have arranged to make the experiment for one year, dating from January, 1878.

“Therefore upon every purchase of tea of the amount of 4d. and upwards a metal warrant will be given, and when these warrants amount to 5s. a return will be made of 4d. in money, which amounts to a dividend of 1s. 4d. in the £ sterling.

“We prefer paying the dividend to purchasers in money as the honest way. When the public have the money in their hands they know that they have their money's worth, which they are not sure of when they are paid a dividend in articles of doubtful value and more doubtful use. We try this experiment because we think a practical and simple form of reciprocity is possible in shopkeeping, and believe that if the public understand it they will try it, and if they do try it they will find it satisfactory.

“The public are not generally aware what interest they have in buying the best teas. The Government duty is uniform, and is sixpence each pound weight upon good and bad teas alike ; so that if a purchaser buys twenty shillings' worth of ‘cheap’ tea, at 1s. 8d. per pound, he pays six shillings in duty, or a Government tax of 30 per cent., while if he bought twenty shillings worth of very fine tea, at 3s. 4d. per pound, he only pays three shillings duty, or a Government tax of 15 per cent., and has the value of the other 15 per cent. in high quality. Thus the public, not being acquainted with the subject, buy ‘cheap’ tea, not knowing that it is the dearest tea, and not only dear, but often dangerous, and they are taxed enormously for drinking it. Whereas the best tea is not only greatly cheaper but a luxury to drink, and goes further, because

it has real quality. We have never sought to sell 'cheap' but 'good' teas. We have made our business by it, and we do not doubt being believed by any who make the experiment of buying from us.

"With accessible, convenient, and commodious premises, and a well-organised service, it is possible for us to sell a larger quantity of tea without increased expenses, and it is the profit upon increased sales, without increased expenses, that enables a dividend to be given. We can thus give (with a dividend of 1s. 4d. in the £) the same superior quality of tea which we have always supplied.

"This is our whole case. Were it not explained, the public might think it a new device to allure custom by seeming to make a gift for which the purchaser paid either in price or quality of the article he bought. Any sensible person can understand the good faith of the plan. We make no change in price—no change in quality. The dividend is given out of economy made by larger sales. It would be dishonest to promise what we could not perform, and foolish to promise what the public did not see could be performed. We have, therefore, frankly explained the grounds on which we ask the support of the public in this experiment of honest and substantial dividends in the tea trade, on the fair principle of reciprocity."

**Progress of Co-operative Workshops.**—The Marquis of Ripon's address to the Congress of Manchester, 1878, which drew attention to the tardy progress of Co-operative Production, increased public interest in it. As yet competitive employers in many towns are before co-operative employers in extending the participation of profits to labour. What visitors to Nottingham hear from workmen in Mr. Samuel Morley's lace factories in that town, would make a remarkable and pleasant chapter in the history of workshops. Some time ago I received from an eminent auctioneer's firm in London (Debenham and Storr) their scheme of the recognition of skill, goodwill, and assiduity in business among their employés, which had many equitable and kind features. The statement had been prepared for the Right Hon. W. H. Smith, who is known to have established similar arrangements in his great business.

**Co-operation Proposed to Pope Pius IX.**—Astute co-operators, with a turn of mind for State Socialism, followed in the footsteps of Mr. Owen, and sought to interest courts and clergy in their schemes. Mr. John Minter Morgan was so sanguine of this kind of success, that he sought an audience with the Pope in 1847. In May, 1846, he had held a public meeting in Exeter Hall, London, at which the Bishop of Norwich, Lord John Manners, and Sir Harry Verney were present. The object was to promote self-supporting villages for people destitute of employment. The number of persons in each village was to be 300, and £40,000 was the capital required for the undertaking. A vague reference occurred in the prospectus to “the period when the inmates would become proprietors”; but whether self-government was then to be a right was not mentioned. The village was to be a place under favourable conditions of religion, morals, health, and industry, into which people were to be invited to come and be good. There were to be two rulers, a resident clergyman and a director; and if they were genial and tolerant gentlemen, a pleasant tame life, undisturbed by Nonconformists or politics, could be had. The Secretaries of the scheme were the Rev. Edmund R. Larken, afterwards one of the principal proprietors of the *Leader* newspaper; the Rev. Joseph Brown, who gave poor London children happy days at Ham Common every year; and Mr. Morgan himself. If the projected villages were to be directed in the spirit of these gentlemen they would surely have been happy and popular. There were three bishops, those of Exeter, St. David’s, and Norwich, Vice-Presidents of the Village Society. Considering how angry the Bishop of Exeter was at Mr. Owen’s community schemes, it was a great triumph of Mr. Morgan to induce this bishop to be Vice-President of another. Lord John Manners, Mr. Monckton Milnes, M.P. (now Lord Houghton), the Hon. W. F. Cowper (now Mr. Cowper-Temple, M.P.) were upon the committee, which included eighteen clergymen. Though these probably had Church objects in view, the majority, like Mr. Cowper-Temple, whom we know as a real friend of Co-operation, were doubtless mainly actuated by a single desire to advance the social improvement of the people. Their prospectus said that “competition in appealing to selfish motives only, enrich-

ing the few and impoverishing the many, is a false and unchristian principle, engendering a spirit of envy and rivalry."

In 1847 Mr. Morgan carried his model and paintings<sup>1</sup> of his village scheme to Rome; he says contemptuously that "the British Consular Agent, being more favourable to Free Trade and the general principles of Political Economy, took no interest in the plan." At length Monsignor Corboli Bussi, Private and Confidential Secretary to the Pope, "devoted nearly an hour and a half to an examination of the plan, and informed Mr. Morgan that His Holiness would meet him at three o'clock or half-past three, as he descended to walk that day, February 23rd, 1847, and that Mr. Morgan was to attend on Monsignor Maestro de Camera, in his apartment a little before three."

On that afternoon the Peripatetic Communist and the Pope were to be seen in consultation together. His Holiness commended the object, and said the painting had been explained to him. Mr. Morgan asked the Pope to commend his plan to the Catholics. He said he would speak to Mr. Freeborn, the Consular Agent. Mr. Morgan wrote to that unsympathetic Consular Agent, who never replied. Then Mr. Morgan prayed Monsignor Bussi that "His Holiness should be pleased to direct that he, Mr. Morgan, should be honoured with a letter implying, in such terms as his superior wisdom and goodness would dictate, that the theory of the plan appeared to be unobjectionable, and that he would be glad to hear of experiments being made according to local circumstances." "Such a letter," Mr. Morgan added, "would not be incompatible with the rule which he understood His Holiness observed of not interfering with the temporal affairs of other countries."

Mr. Morgan's transparent painting was sent back to him with the civil intimation that the Holy Father and August Sovereign had "gone so far as to remit the printed exposition which accompanied Mr. Morgan's project to the examination of the Agricultural Commission, presided over by His Eminence Cardinal Massimo."

<sup>1</sup> Where are they now? They were of some merit as works of art, for Mr. Morgan was a gentleman of wealth and taste. They ought to be preserved in the Social Museum of the Central Board.



The Christian Village propagandist had interviews with Cardinal Massimo, and sent to the Pope the assurance that, "that which peculiarly distinguished the proposed Christian colony from the constitution of society in general, was the power which it afforded of maintaining the supremacy of religion, not only in theory and in precept, and in framing the laws and regulations, but by suppressing and prohibiting all institutions, practices, and influences calculated to impair the love of God and man as the ruling principle of action."

There is no more instructive example than this of what state or clerical socialism comes to. Never before was such a proposal carried to Rome by an English Protestant gentleman. It was an offer to place Co-operative Industrialism under the conditions of an absolute clerical despotism, which might include an Inquisition in every village. No poverty, no precariousness of competitive life is more abject or humiliating than this tutelage and control.

Mgr. John Corboli Bussi wrote Mr. Morgan from Quirinal Palace, April 18, 1847, saying, "Very willingly I will place under the eyes of His Holiness, my august sovereign, the note you have remitted : and afterwards, as I suppose, it will be communicated to the Agricultural Commission. But I am not able to foresee the result. Certainly I cannot but praise your moral principles and judgment, and I believe every generous and religious heart would partake of them. But as to the application of these principles to the economy of a country like ours I could not dare to have an opinion."

Thus ended the negotiations between Mr. Morgan and the Pope. Some respect is due to the Vatican for allowing the proposal made to it—to pass out of sight.

When old feudality disappeared, and the serf-class passed into dependence upon the capitalist class, anybody with eyes that could see social effects discerned that wages which gave industrial freedom would lead to growing intelligence and social aspiration, which being constantly checked by the powerful ambition of capital, there would be never-ending hostility between capital and labour. This opened a field which unscrupulous adventurers could enter and obtain a following, by promising workmen political deliverance. When working



people came to have votes, the same adventurers taught them distrust of their own efforts, distrust of the middle class, who were nearest to them in sympathy, and who alone stood between the people and the sole rule of the aristocracy. When this distrust was well diffused, these skilful professors of sympathy with the people asked for their confidence at the poll, which, as soon as it was obtained, they set up Personal Government, and put a sword to the throats of those who had given them power, as the Emperor Napoleon did. State Socialism means the promise of a dinner, and a bullet when you ask for it. It never meant anything else and never gave anything else. Co-operation is the discovery of the means by which an industrious man can provide his own dinner without depriving any one else of his.

## CHAPTER XL

## THE SONG OF STATE SOCIALISM

"Make no more giants, God,  
But elevate the race at once."

ROBERT BROWNING.

FEUDALITY is not out of the bones of people in England, even now. Free workmen still expect from employers something of the gifts and care of vassalage, though they no longer render vassal service. Landlords still look for the allegiance of their tenants, notwithstanding that they charge them rent for their lands. In other countries, Despotism, tempered by paternal government, trains the people to look for State redress and State management. State Socialism seems one of the diseases of despotism, whose policy it is to encourage dependence.

The working man, with no fortune save his capacity of industry, lives under the despotism of Trade, which, better than the despotism of Government, leaves him the freedom of opportunity. He remains subject to the precariousness of hire. It is labour being imprisoned in the cage of wages, that has inclined its ear to the sirens of State Socialism. Ferdinand Lassalle, Karl Marx, and Lord Beaconsfield—three Jewish leaders whose passion has been ascendancy, have all sung in varying tunes the same song. Lassalle cried aloud to German workmen: "Put no trust in thrift. The cruel, brazen law of wages makes individual exertion unavailing. Look to State help." Marx exclaimed: "Despise this dwarfish redress the slaves of capital can win." Disraeli sent the Young England party to offer patrician sympathy, maypoles, and charity. Auguste Comte proposed confidence and a plentiful trencher.

The Emperor Napoleon told French artisans that "Industry was a machine working without a regulator, totally unconcerned about its moving power, crushing beneath its wheels both men and matter." They were all known by one sign—Paternal Despotism. They all sang the same song—"Abjure politics, party, and self-effort, and the mill of the State, which we shall turn, will grind you benevolently in a way of its own." If the expression is allowable to me, I should say—God preserve working men from the "Saviours of Society."

"Property has its duties as well as its rights." If property is honestly come by, are we under the necessity or duty of parting with it? When something is required to be done for those who have no means of doing it for themselves, the richer people are now expected to assist in providing what is wanted. What is this but a humanitarian confiscation of the property of those from whom such help is extracted? What is this but industrial mendicancy on the part of those who receive it? Why should workmen need to stoop to this? Why should they not possess the means to provide themselves with what they need? A municipal town of independence, desiring some improvement, does not beg; it assesses itself for the expense. In the same manner, the working class anywhere, needing an institution, or an advantage, should do as co-operators do—pass a levy upon themselves—not pass round the hat to their richer neighbours. Has property intrinsic duties of charity? The poor have duties—and it is the first duty of the industrious poor not to be poor. Because of their helplessness now, the poor may accept the politic largesses of the rich; but they have no claim thereto. The obligation lies upon them always and everywhere to find out *why riches accumulate in other hands and not in theirs*, and to take immediate and persistent steps to amend the irregularity. The rich—if we except the "out-door relief" to the aristocracy, which Mr. Bright considers is dispensed at the Horse Guards and Admiralty—do not ask for State Socialism. Only men mendicant-minded do that, or ever think of it.

The policy of Liberalism is to encourage the people to owe everything to themselves. The policy of Conservatism is to impress the people with the belief that they owe everything to their superiors. By giving back to the people some of the money taken from them, these sort of rulers obtain the in-

fluence of donors, and conceal from the people that the money given them is their own.

State Socialism being a disease of some of the rich as well as of many of the poor, is not to be regarded as though it were necessarily a crime in artisans. The Socialists and Nihilists among workmen are not the dangerous class they are represented. A little outrage of speech or act on their part is made to go a long way by classes more dangerous than they, who, unwilling to accord redress, are glad of pretexts of repression.<sup>1</sup> Alarmed power has many friends. A great cry goes up in the Press against assassins, while few cry out against the oppression which creates the assassinations of despair. Irritated Paternal Government is ferocious. The "Father of his People" in Russia will commit more murders in a day than all the Nihilists in the empire in a generation.

Despotic "Order" has its Robespierres as well as Anarchy. The armed and conspiring Buonapartes, Bismarcks, and Czars are bloodier far than the impotent and aspiring poor.

The conditions of the many predispose them to distrust. Mr. Mill has described them in a comprehensive passage:—

"No longer enslaved or made dependent by force of law, the great majority are so by force of poverty. They are still chained to a place, to an occupation, and to conformity to the will of an employer, and debarred from advantages which others inherit without exertion, and independently or desert."<sup>2</sup>

This class of persons, dependent on the mercy, caprice, or necessities of capital, have a very bad outlook. Hopeless men are always disposed to listen to any proposal of arranging things on their behalf. To such persons the idea of looking for help within their own order does not occur to them. They see no avenue of self-help open to them. If they did, they would not be despairing.

In the meantime the State—not a thing independent of the people, but a system under the control of the people—should

<sup>1</sup> Many things which never happened are attributed to Socialists and Nihilists. Some of them are furious enough, like the Fenians, to claim untraced crimes as acts of their side—it aiding their policy of terror without increasing their danger. In Germany, where liberty is regulated by troopers, in Russia, where the succession to the crown is adjusted by murder, any popular movement may be expected to be imitative of its superiors.

<sup>2</sup> "Socialism." *Fortnightly Review*, March, 1879.

have charge only of those general interests which from time to time may be committed to it. If towns may acquire lands for free parks, provide free libraries, free education (for a time), tolless roads, improved streets, acquire waterworks, gasworks, and taverns, the State may take upon itself other limited public duties, and organise railway transit, and even acquire the land, using the increment in its value for national expenditure, as the public welfare may determine.

Free Government is yet in its infancy, and the line is not yet traced between State action and local life. Many consider that the State may represent the uniformity of law, protection, order, right, and national economy ; while Social life should keep free, industry, conscience, education, individuality, and progress. Of one thing we are sure, that the world has been too much governed by persons whose talent has lain chiefly in taking care of themselves. There have always been too many people ready to regulate society in their own interests, whereas the welfare of the world lies in the direction of self-government. Humanity has been too much sat upon by rulers—Heaven-born and Devil-born—the latter class chiefly prevailing. The far-seeing prayer of Browning—that God should make no more giants, but elevate the race at once—should be put up in all the churches. What we want in society is no leadership save that of thought—no authority save that of principles—no laws save those which increase honest freedom—no influence save that of service. The English working class, if not brilliant, have a steady, dogged, unsubduable instinct of self-sufficiency in them. Being a self-acting race, they are alike impatient of military or spiritual mastery, or paternal coddling, and in their crude but manly and ever-improving way they make it their business to take care of the State, and not to call upon the State to take care of them.



PART III

FROM 1876 TO 1904







60, Morrison

To  
WALTER MORRISON

OF MALHAM TARN

TO WHOM CO-OPERATION OWES MORE

THAN IT KNOWS

FOR SERVICE AND SACRIFICE





## CHAPTER XLI

## TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIAL AIMS

ALL the fervour and earnestness of early Co-operative Societies was not, as the reader has seen, about Co-operation, as it is now known, but about communistic life. The "Socialists," so frequently heard of then, were Communists. They hoped to found voluntary, self-supporting, self-controlled, industrial cities, in which the wealth created was to be equitably shared by all whose labour produced it. Participation was to be the cardinal principle of the new Socialist organisation of society. As the expense was beyond the means of the people, Mr. Owen proposed that the funds should be supplied by the State. He sought State-initiation—not State support—as these cities were to be self-sustained. Whether communities so originated would end in State control of production and distribution appears never to have been discussed, as no State took the steps proposed.

In the "Socialist" agitation taken up by the people, the State was left out and the people came in. Their communities were intended to be independent and controlled by the residents for themselves.

This scheme of communist life was sometimes spoken of under the name of "Co-operation," as indicating that the exertions of all must be *co-operant* to the common good.

The theory of equitable Co-operation is—in the workshop—5 per cent. to capital, to the customers what may be necessary, 5 per cent. to education, 10 per cent. to labour. In the store—5 per cent. to capital, 5 per cent. to

education, 10 per cent. to customers, and the same to all in the employ of the store.

Capital and custom are always trade charges. Other divisions are made out of profit and vary as the members direct.

The Rochdale Pioneers founded a new form of Co-operation; their inspiration was communistic. They were all of that persuasion. Their intention was to raise funds for community purposes. It was because they had these aims that they provided for education. They carried participation into the workshop, as their object was the emancipation of labour from capitalist exploitation. They had no idea of founding a race of grocers, but a race of men. Communism suffered incarnation in their hands, and the new birth was the co-operative store—a far lesser creation; still that was much. It put honesty into trade, and increased means to countless families.

**Classification of Stores.**—The rise of Distributive Co-operation warrants the division of commercial enterprises into public and private trading. Co-operators are public traders, who take their customers into partnership. Private traders are they who conduct their business for their own personal advantage.

Co-operative Stores may be regarded as divisible into Dark Stores, Twilight Stores, and Sunrise Stores. The "Dark" Stores are those which give no share of profits to those they employ—give credit—which keeps up the habit of indebtedness in their members—and have no education fund in their rules. The "Twilight" stores are those which have some features of others of a "Sunrise" Store, but not all. "Sunrise" Stores are those which have the cardinal features of ready-money dealing, provision for intelligence, and who give the same dividend on the wages of all their employés as they give to the consumer who purchases at their counter. If "Sunrise" Stores increase it will be owing to the Women's Guilds, when they understand what true Co-operation means. If a man accepts a principle and finds it takes trouble to put it into practice, he explains it away, and says he carries it out—when he does not—and his assurances satisfy the male mind. But you cannot fool a woman this way. She expects a right principle to be acted upon, and she will not, if she knows it, connive at its evasion. It has been no uncommon thing to hear heads of departments

who never put participation into operation, loudly declare themselves in favour of it—provided it is not to be carried out. They do not say so, but that is their meaning, judged by their conduct. These evaders would never impose on a congress of women who had thought upon the subject.

## CHAPTER XLII

## GROWTH OF SOCIETIES

"It is not by the purity of the sinless alone, that progress is advanced. It was not by the monk in his cell, or the saint in his closet, but by the valiant worker in humble sphere and in dangerous days, that the landmarks of liberty were pushed forward."—W. R. GREG.

**English Co-operative Wholesale Society.**—First in magnitude is the Co-operative Wholesale Society of Manchester, familiarly known as the "C.W.S." It publishes an annual volume, of pictorial and literary interest. It is also the statistical authority of the extent of the Co-operative movement. The reader has seen a table of the progress of the Wholesale Society from 1864 to 1877 (p. 357). Its amazing growth is shown in the statement published on its authority in the *Co-operative News*, June 23, 1904. (See opposite page.)

The business and possessions of this great society annually increase.

**The Scottish Wholesale Society.**—The Scottish Wholesale Society was founded in 1872. True to the traditions of Co-operation in Scotland—the scene of great manufacturing triumph—at New Lanark the Society accorded a share of profits to the workers it employed. Though not enough to be much of an inspiration to workers, it recognises the principle of participation, which is creditable to the sense of honour and equity, associated with the Scottish character. In the Table of Great Societies given elsewhere it will be seen that the Glasgow Distributive Society gives the same dividend to its workers as to the consumers. There are in Scotland several co-partnership manufacturing societies. It is a great merit in the Scottish Wholesale Society that it has never assumed the character of a mere



# THE CO-OPERATIVE WHOLESALE SOCIETY

Founded 1864, in MANCHESTER, it has now  
Branches at NEWCASTLE and LONDON.

## *Depôts and Salerooms:*

Bristol, Cardiff, Northampton, Birmingham, Blackburn,  
Huddersfield, Leeds, Nottingham, and Longton.

Is a Federation of

1,133 Retail . .  
Societies.

Representing a  
Membership of

1,445,099  
Persons.

Owning 8 Steamships,  
11 Foreign and 4 Ship-  
ping & Forwarding  
Depôts,

4 Irish Depôts,

38 Creameries (with  
50 Auxiliaries),

2 Fruit Farms,

Tea Estates in Ceylon,

And 50 Productive  
Departments.

Annual

Sales :

20

Millions

Total Sales,

— £ —

245,893,759

Total Profits,

— £ —

3,706,924

And a Banking

Turnover of

87 MILLIONS

Its Boot Works are at Leicester, Heckmondwike, Enderby, and  
Rushden, and it makes more than 2,000,000 pairs yearly.

EMPLOYING IN ALL ITS DEPARTMENTS

NEARLY 15,000 PERSONS

consumers' association, making the consumer the unit of co-operative effort—which the late Judge Hughes used to call “a Gut’s Gospel.” It recognises labour as also worthy of consideration, which gives an honest flavour to all their productions, and makes Shieldhall, where their principal factories are, historic ground, which the co-operative traveller visits with pride. The Scottish Wholesale is remarkable for the efficiency and economy of its administration, which is no mean one in extent. The following are its statistics for 1904 :—

Number of Co-operative Societies	...	...	322
Number of Members	...	...	288,395
Amount of Capital—Share and Loan	...	...	£5,219,022
Reserve Funds	...	...	£376,327
Amount of Trade	...	...	£15,309,163
Profits earned, including interest	...	...	£1,849,885

**The Great Baking Society of Glasgow.**—When the Great United Baking Society of McNeil Street, Glasgow, began in 1869 (the year of the first Co-operative Congress in London)<sup>1</sup> in South Coburg Street, Glasgow, it employed one man. In 1904 it employed 1,102. The Society has a capital of £3,300. It has reserves of £30,000. The trading profits average over £40,000 a year, £6,000 of which goes to the employés in addition to their wages, and £34,000 goes to purchasers. In 1903, 131 societies were members of it, and their sales amounted to £422,700.

From time to time attempts have been made by some who seem to regard Co-operation as a predatory movement, to steal from the hard-working bakers their share of profits, and reduce them to the level of hired labourers in capitalistic workshops. What right has the well-fed consumer—whose chief service to the movement is eating for it—to the profits of the workman who labours for it?

The chief Bakery of the Society in McNeil Street is allowed by traders to be the greatest in the world, as well as being a notable structure. Their new Bakery in Belfast is also of fine aspect, as are some of their branches in Scotland. It is singular that in Scotland, where parsimony in building would be expected,

<sup>1</sup> The reader will see that the Royal Arsenal Society of Woolwich began in the same year, which is foremost among English Societies for its Sunrise system of participation.

they have erections, as in Glasgow, of great architectural beauty.

**Rochdale Equitable Pioneers.**—Taking a typical selection of the chief societies in the order of their ages, Rochdale comes first, as its institution of participation with its members created a new order of societies. The story of the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers is familiar throughout the co-operative world. The reader will find its career recounted in Chapter XVII. The table of their progress shows that in 1876 the number of members was 8,892—their funds were £254,000, their business amounted to £305,190, and their profits to £50,668.

In 1904 the number of members were 11,986, the amount of funds was £223,313, the amount of business £251,398, and the profits £36,454, exclusive of interest paid to members. The Education Fund was £769 in 1903. In 1905 increasing prosperity was setting in.

In opening the new Offices in 1893, Mr. Kershaw, the President, stated that during the fifty-three years of its existence the society had done a total business of £10,341,458, and paid its members interest and profits £1,588,400.

**Rochdale Provident Society.**—That the original Rochdale Society has not grown as many other societies have, continuously, is partly owing to the lack of a contiguous population, which has given to some other towns opportunities of indefinite expansion; the Equitable Pioneers, however, appears to represent the ethical co-operative element in the town.

It must be taken into account that Co-operation, in one form or other, has a large prevalence in Rochdale. A rival society has been running for many years, which owed its origin to the success of the Equitable Society. Readers of the "History of the Pioneers" are aware that for a long time parliamentary candidates, Mr. Cobden especially, were vehemently opposed by the Conservative party, because of friendliness to local co-operators. At length, in 1870, Conservatives contributed to the formation of a new association, which bore the name of the "Provident Co-operative Society," which now occupies a considerable building in Lord Street. A late report shows that it has a capital of £139,000, and 9,000 members. It professes to be "established for the social

advancement of its Members," but it is very economical in promoting it. It has no educational department, its twenty-seven branches have no news-room, it has no library, it maintains no scientific classes, it copies the business features of its great predecessor, but gives no pledge of honesty in dealing and genuineness of commodities. Its aim appears to be to make dividends free from the impediment of ethical restrictions. Its members derive business benefits from dealing with it, and obtain good dividends on their purchases. They owe their advantages to the Pioneers, who taught them that Co-operation was a method of material improvement. The Provident is run upon the sordid lines of mere commercialism. Its fiscal administration was borrowed from the Equitable Society in whose service its first manager was for several years, and who left because his proposed methods of business were thought undesirable. Many members of the Equitable Society are also members of the Provident, which, of course, diminishes the sales of the Equitable, and accounts for the reduction of its profits over former years. This Provident Society is not co-operative, but a cheap selling store.

**The Leeds Industrial Society.**—The giant store at Leeds, the largest of all, arose in many contentions and was blown into substantiality by tornadoes of debate of many years' duration. The society commenced in 1847, incited by chance reports of the Rochdale Pioneers, who were then only in the third year of their operations. Leeds had been for some time the centre of the Socialist agitation, and had more persons of enthusiasm and initiative ability in it than any other town.

The earlier years of the society were the most turbulent of any in store history. Its dramatic story is told in its Jubilee History and need not be repeated here. The society began with fifty-eight pioneers and arose out of Flour. The adulteration and dearth of that article was a very serious thing when the co-operators began to deliver the town from the costly peril. It celebrated its jubilee in 1897. Though vast it is not a Sunrise store, and shares no profits with shopmen or workers—it brought great saving to the people and much social improvement. Shorter hours of attendance came to every shop server in Leeds, through the influence of the example of the great store, and had it thought of endowing

its many workpeople it would have been richer than it is, and brought gladness to the workshops throughout the North of England. Leeds would then be a proud name in Co-operation. It is now merely a great one.

The magnitude of the society is shown in the fact that it has 49,340 members. At the end of 1904 the net profits for the year exceeded £200,000, in addition to £26,000 paid as interest on capital. The produce of the corn mill appears to have amounted to 158,000 bags, which Dominie Sampson would declare a "prodigious" output. The sales for the year 1904 exceeded £1,525,000.

After thirty-nine years' debate (for the question of the intelligence of the members was always in the minds of the best friends of the society) a resolution was carried to devote  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. of the profits to education, which, the profit being so large, gives the handsome sum of £1,500 for the year. Thus the society emerged from the Dark store stage, but not with impetuosity, it must be owned. It has more than ten productive departments. It has added streets of admirable houses to the town. Its members and its administration comprise a little nation. It has a great secretary in John W. Fawcett. Its many and far-extending branches are without parallel in co-operative annals. Its Jubilee History exceeds in dramatic incidents that of any other. It publishes a monthly *Record*, remarkable for quantity, quality of its paragraphs, and variety of its information. It is edited by Mr. John Fawcett.

**The Great Derby Society.** — The Derby Society has a romantic history. It began in 1850, through reports of a wandering carpenter made at the House of Call. He had been in Rochdale and noted the success of the new store there, which had been in operation for six years. Derby workmen thought they could do what Rochdale workmen had done, and they commenced a store, which burrowed in alleys that had no thoroughfare and finally emerged from dark retreats into open day and opulent streets. It possesses now the most imposing business property in the best part of the town, and had a membership in 1904 of 18,676. Its sales for 1904 amounted to £455,290. It paid an annual dividend to members of £56,875, £1,063 to employés, and £578 to education. The society's land and business premises have cost £181,853;



its various holdings being sixty-four in number, consisting of houses, warehouses, grocery shops, meat shops, bakeries, stables, builders' yard, and dairies. It takes two days of swift riding to visit the whole of them. The operations and extent of this society are marvellous in their variety and interest. Derby was the third store that celebrated its jubilee. I had then the pleasure of writing its history as well as the Jubilee History of Leeds. Both little volumes are plentifully illustrated, and comprise more incidents, more dramatic experience, more vicissitudes and triumphs of industrial enterprise than many other books on Co-operation. Long ago Derby procured from a Norman king a Charter for keeping ideas out of the town. It succeeded in being for centuries the most stationary, insipid, vacant-minded town in the kingdom. The only instance of independence in those days was that of a blind girl who refused assent to the doctrine of the Real Presence, for which she was burnt alive. But Thought was too strong for the Charter. It did not for ever keep out ideas, and made amends by giving birth to William Hutton, an original historian, and to Herbert Spencer, the prince of scientific thinkers, and putting into practice Co-operation on a splendid scale.

**The Oldham Industrial Society.**—One is named the Industrial, situated in King Street, and the Equitable on Greenacres Hill, commonly spoken of as the "King Street Store" and the "Greenacres Store." The Industrial is a year older than the Equitable, and is still the larger of the two.

The Industrial Society commenced in 1850, and held its Jubilee in 1900. As its first year's dividend amounted to £120 it probably had 240 members, but no record exists of them. In 1905 its members numbered 14,996. The share capital in 1850 was £462. In 1905 it amounted to £159,819. In the first year, as we have said, it paid £120 in dividends. In 1905 its estimated dividend would be £94,488, nearing £100,000. Its sales for 1904 were £516,284. The dividend of members is 3s. in the £. Grants to education average £2,000 a year. Its sheet almanac gives engravings of three fine buildings, the Central Stores and two noble branches, but which is which is not indicated. Of course all the members know, but the almanac compilers commonly forget that it is consulted in distant places, and often in distant lands,

where no local knowledge can assist the curious reader. This society has its news-rooms in Foundry Street, and in the branch stores, supplied with all the principal newspapers, open daily and free to all the members and their families. It has a library of 17,500 volumes. The store has twenty-seven branches. Its quarterly report is the most portable, simple, and intelligible of any.

Fifty years is the appointed period of deliverance for Jews. In these later days it is considered the allotted period of a movement after which it may be said to enter a future life. So little did many of our societies expect to attain the longevity of a jubilee that they kept no records of the experience of their youth.

**The Oldham Equitable Society.**—The Equitable, Mr. James Wood informs me, has no authentic record for the first twenty years of its proceedings. In 1870 it had 1,965 members—in 1904 it had 12,368. In 1870 it had six branches—in 1904 it had twenty branches. In 1870 its net profits were nearly £7,000—in 1904 they exceeded £43,000. In 1870 its honourable grant to Education was £136, which increased every year, until in 1903 it reached the sum of £1,260. Between 1870 and 1903 its Educational grants amounted to £30,000. Mr. James Wood has been its Secretary since 1870, a period of thirty-four years—which is one answer to those who think that democratic service must be fitful, short, and precarious.

**The Halifax Society.**—Halifax was the first store after Rochdale which excited public attention and hope. I spent a week at the store, in which a room was assigned me, where I wrote the History of the society down to 1866. In consequence of reports I made to Mazzini and Prof. F. W. Newman, they wrote to the members letters memorable to this day. They appear with other incidents in the history of the marvellous career of the earlier days of the society. In 1901 was published its Jubilee History, which does not give the members a vivid idea of the brave men and true men who made the fortune of the store of which they are so justly proud. Mr. M. Blatchford, the writer, speaks of "his entire ignorance of the history of the society." It would be unfair to say that his pages justify his confession, for he has produced a book of much

historic interest. The society, which began in 1851 in financial nothingness, was rich in that faith in self-help which has produced all our great societies. The Halifax Society possessed at the time of its Jubilee thirty-four branches. In 1904 the number of members was 10,691, the sales for 1904 were £312,911, the share capital was £121,875, and the profit, including interest to members, was £46,481—the dividend to members was 2s. 9d. in the £, for Education a grant of £115 is accorded. The number of persons in the employ of the society are 330. But to these, although the members are working men themselves, they give no share of the profits they help to make by their fidelity and labour.

The first history of the Halifax Society I dedicated—

To

HORACE GREELEY,

The eminent American journalist,

Who has ever welcomed in the United States of America  
Systems of Self-help for the People,

Which he has himself advanced by a generous advocacy,  
And illustrated by an unrivalled career.

**Manchester and Salford Society.**—Few are aware that there is a Sunrise store in Manchester. The great Co-operative Society of the City and Salford situated in Downing Street is of this class. Mr. Charles Wright calls it the “Acorn” store, which—owing in no mean measure to his services as its secretary—is now an Oak store. The “Acorn” was sown at 169, Great Ancoats Street, in June, 1859. It began more hopefully than most stores. It had 111 members and a capital of £289. Its sales in the first week were £32. The rent of their shop was only £13, yet its receipts for the first complete year were £7,687. Then as now there was generous sentiment in Manchester, which believed that industrial rightness could be trusted in the market. There was a Roby Brotherhood then, connected with the Roby Chapel in Piccadilly of that city, and on Christmas Eve, 1859, they held a meeting and decided to begin a Manchester and Salford Equitable, that they might work for the good of each and all. It was this spirit which made the society successful. Members who were living at its commencement gratefully recall every Christmas Eve when

"Peace and Goodwill" came to them through the noble aspirations of the Roby Brotherhood.

Like Rochdale, the Manchester and Salford Society took the name of Equitable, and in consistency to the name commenced, in 1872, to share profits with its employes, which now number 600, who from that date to March, 1905, have received £20,581. Up to March, 1905, that society has spent on educational purposes £14,940. Blessed are the words Equity and Brotherhood. The oak growth of the "Acorn" society is evident in the fact that its capital (March, 1905) was £221,550, its roll of members 16,521, its yearly sales average £370,088. Its bread sales are over 24,000 4-lb. loaves a week. It owns 79 horses, 81 vehicles, 34 10-ton coal waggons for bringing coal direct from the collieries, property in the city and suburbs which has cost £107,387. It paid £8,121 interest to its members in 1904, and £38,440 in dividends. Since the society began (1859 to 1905) its business has amounted to nearly £9,000,000. Members have received nearly £192,000 in interest, and in dividend £792,000. The society counts as a distinction that among its members have been Mr. E. V. Neale, Dr. John Watts, Sir Edward Watkin, and Henry Pitman, editor of the *Co-operator*.

There was an earlier Manchester and Salford Industrial Society before 1859. It had a shop at 519, Ashton Old Road, Openshaw, and one in Ardwick, with a stone beehive over the door. The beehive was still there in 1878, but over a toffee shop.

Like Leeds, the Manchester Society has a monthly *Herald*, alike notable for wisdom of suggestions and amplitude of information. Its editor was Mr. Charles Wright, and its pages under his successor, Mr. Harold Denham, display like quality.

**Bolton.**—*Great and Little Societies.*—It is good to come upon a real "Sunrise" store. There are two Boltons—Great and Little. The store bears both names. It began in 1859. How odd that news of the Rochdale Pioneers had effect in Leeds when they were but three years old, and after six years' progress inspired Derby with action. News of their example never reached Bolton until the Rochdale Society was fifteen years old. That was two years after the appearance of their history. But no great society, save Woolwich, has so



improved on the Rochdale system. Bolton surpasses Leeds, and Derby surpasses Leeds, and Barnsley British does nothing for labour. Bolton gives its employés more than £3,000, and a similar sum for Education. Bolton is a true Sunrise store. It has a real claim upon the zeal and thoughtfulness of its servants which no store has which excludes them from participation in the profits they assist to make. The members find a response to their act of justice, for their dividend on purchases is 3s. in the £. Their share capital is £651,655. Trade exceeds £789,753. The members number 31,369, whose profits are nearly £115,000. Its premises are fine, it has branches and productive works, and gives liberally to public objects. Mr. Beckett was long one of their chief officers.

Bolton, in the nobility of its citizens, is fortunate and distinguished. It is there Free Trade was born, and Thomas Thomasson was its inspirer. He was the only manufacturer in the North who understood Political Economy as a commercial science ; at least, if any one else did so, it did not transpire in a public way. With him freedom of trade was not a mere theory—it was a passion. He felt that national prosperity depended on it. He was the inciter and counsellor of Cobden and Bright. In noble gifts he was as unsectarian as his principles. He was happy in descendants of like quality. His son, John Pennington Thomasson, gave great gifts to the town and store. He built and furnished the Thomasson Co-operative Institute, which consists of men and women's reading-rooms, smoke-room, and bath-rooms, and undertook to supply the rooms with papers, magazines, and to bear all charges of rates, taxes, lighting, and heating. The Bolton Co-operative Society is responsible for the management. Working women never had such dainty accommodation as they enjoy in Bolton, which they owe to Mrs. J. P. Thomasson's kindly forethought and device. Mr. Franklin Thomasson, the surviving representative of the family, sustains its noblest traditions.

**The Great Plymouth Store.**—Plymouth stands next in the order of honour and time. It commenced in 1860. Its origin was humble and hopeless. Of the three founders, Reynolds, Webb, and Goodanew, I knew the last best, who was good enough for anything that required faith and courage.



When I first spoke to him about forming a store he was a small, dark-haired, bright-eyed, ardent man, a shoemaker, following his trade in a small book-shop so crowded with unsold publications—radical and freethought—that he seemed to be buried in them. Now a noble pile of buildings, with a notable architectural skyline, represents the great store in Frankfort Street, the freehold costing nearly £40,000, the total value of their freeholds being £220,355. There are thirty-six branches and departments. Their members numbered in March, 1905, 34,880; the receipt for goods for the year 1904 was £650,931. They have the old pioneer rule of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for Education, which for the first quarter of 1905 amounted to £615—at the rate of £2,460 a year—a share of profits to employés at the rate of £3,200 a year. Mr. W. H. Watkin, manager of the store dairy, informs me that it can be said of its cream, “that it is produced in a co-operative dairy, by co-operative employés, with co-operative appliances, and from co-operative milk; that the milk comes from co-operative cows, fed on co-operative grass, grown on co-operative land.” In a further letter Mr. Watkin adds, what ought to be recorded in honour of this great profit-sharing society: “Our milk vendors are paid a minimum of 24s. per week. This is between 4s. and 7s. above the pay of that class of man in the town. In addition to this they are allowed a commission on all milk sold above a weekly quantity of 110 gallons. Some men increase their weekly earnings 25 per cent. in this way, and still in addition to this they participate in the general bonus allowed to employés out of the profits made by the society, which bonus now amounts in the aggregate to considerably over £2,000 per annum. The total number of employés is about 1,000.”

**The Leicester Society.**—This live co-operative town is a seat of productive societies. Its co-operative distributive store began in 1860–1. Faithful adherents brought it through years of precariousness and vicissitude. The idea of commencing a society originated around a factory stove fire. An authorless, well-illustrated book tells its curious story. Being a yearly visitor to Leicester from 1843, I used to look in the successive shops in which they did business, assured of their progress, as I was that of the Hosiery Society, which commenced ten years

later, of which George Newell was the inspirer—bright, ardent, cheery, and picturesque, with few parallels anywhere.

Not till the third year of the existence of the store did its members amount to 180. No one among them had any belief that the experience of their early days would be of interest in the future. No record of it was made. Now they own commanding premises in Union Street, and in 1905 the members numbered 18,800, their total capital is £216,855, their trade for 1904 £442,151. The profit made since their commencement is £563,302. They have spent upon their Education Department £10,828. The award to Education is by rule  $1\frac{1}{4}$  per cent., yielding an average of £650 a year. The employés of this great store number 350, who participate in its profit to the extent of half the dividend (2s. 6d. in the £ paid to members), averaging £1,600 a year. The seal of the store includes views of trade, commerce, and manufacture, surrounded by the words "Equitable Participation," words used by no other society, and the store goes half-way in fulfilment of it in its recognition of the rights of labour. The Leicester store stands in the list of the "Sunrise" societies.

**The Barnsley British Society.**—There was a co-operative store in Barnsley recorded in Baine's Directory in 1822, the year after the beginning of stores represented in the *Economist* of 1821. The Barnsley Store began among the weavers of "Barebones." Bare bones were plentiful among weavers in those days. The "Barebone" store had life in it, for it lasted up till 1840, and had a library of seventy-two volumes, which perhaps accounts for its vitality. In 1862 the present Barnsley British Society originated at Tinker's Temperance Hotel in "Bleak Barnsley," as Lister, the poet, calls the town. The 1862 society was mainly prompted by George Adcroft, a collier, a strong man, of strong character and strong co-operative conviction, a bold and ready speaker. It was a grocer who let them the house in which Co-operation awoke after a Rip van Winkle sleep of twenty-two years. It has now many departments and important productive works. In their yearly balance sheet, December, 1904, the sales of the corn mill exceeded £180,000, those of mineral waters are set down at £3,894, and the bakery sales at £6,000. They give with heartiness 1 per cent. of the net profits to Education, £758 for the year. The

members exceed 21,000. Their yearly profits amount to £115,320. They employ 665 persons, and accord them no share of the profit they help to make.

The society celebrated its fortieth year of its successful existence by publishing in 1902 a Coronation History of it. It is a sensibly-written history notwithstanding its regal title. There are no less than sixty-nine illustrations of stores and portraits, the last of which is Thomas Lister, whose friendship I was proud to share. He sacrificed a valuable appointment rather than take an oath. The Coronation History discloses that during forty years all the presidents were one-initial men. During the first fifteen years only one member of committee was elected who had two initials. Out of seventy-one managers sixty-one are one-initial men. In America every man would have had three initials. Is it in this way they seek to show themselves to be British?

All I can learn of the reason for the singular name, "Barnsley British," is that the Registrar had on his list another Barnsley Society, and suggested the term British. He might as well have selected Barnsley Bacon,<sup>1</sup> whereas every society in Great Britain is British.

**The Stockton-on-Tees Society.**—The Stockton Provident Society may be taken as an illustration of the rise and progress of many great stores, which to enumerate would convert these pages into a catalogue. The Stockton store commenced in 1865, under the usual conditions of resourcelessness and obscurity, at a meeting at the Unicorn Inn. Its originators were inspired by the history of the Rochdale Pioneers. Its growth may be shown in a few lines. In 1876 the number of members was 1,975. That year the profits were £1,894. For the ten years ending in 1904 the profits made were £277,284, and the members advanced to 10,901. The employes receive no share of profits, and the grant for educational purposes is fixed at the timorous amount of  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the profits. In the two years ending 1904 the trade of the society has increased 20 per cent., when they began extending their operations to baking, building, plumbing, joinery, painting, and paper-hanging. They have acquired land, and are erecting new

<sup>1</sup> Bacon, after the great Lord of that name, might have given Barnsley a porcine rivalry with Chicago.

branches, business having outgrown the old ones. They have negotiated for land for the erecting of two hundred or more houses. The society has thirteen branches, a flour mill, coal, and meat depôts, and rents a farm of 115 acres. Last year a wise and informing address, made at the request of the society, and giving a vivid history of it, was delivered by the Secretary, George A. McEwen, who has been for years in the service of the society.

**The Royal Arsenal Society.**—The Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society takes rank as a noble Sunrise store. It was constructed and inspired by the genius of a Scotsman, Alexander McLeod. On his death, a grateful society put up a statue to his memory,—the only instance in which a store has thus perpetuated the memory of its founder. Yet this great store had a pitiful beginning. Its first quarter's profit was only £1 18s. 11d., its second quarter gave £4 10s. 2d.; its third quarter yielded £7 8s. 7½d.; while the fourth quarter fell to £6 os. 5¼d. The first year of storekeeping yielded only £19 18s. 1¾d. It was not until the end of the year that a dividend of 6d. in the pound was declared, and the whole of the fixtures, £7 11s., were depreciated at 100 per cent. This prudent decision was owing to the judgment of Mr. McLeod, as the amount of its profits was owing to his devotion. He went up to London to buy the stock, brought it down with him, and carried it from the station to the store, to diminish the expense.

The society commenced in 1869, the year of the first Congress. The number of members then was 47. Now in 1905 there are 24,120. The original capital of the society was £27. It is now £352,259. Its sales are £500,000. Its members' dividends amount now—1905—to £38,219, besides paying £16,173 interest. The payment of profit to employes commenced in 1873. The amount then was £1 4s. 9d. It is now £2,990, which is shared alike by all—manager and labourer, men and women, youths and girls, in every department, factory, and farm—every one finds pleasure and profit in working in such a co-operative society.

The education fund, which begun in 1877, amounted to £20 10s. 6d. then, and is now £1,032 a year.

The Central Stores are architecturally the largest and most



imposing in England or Scotland, and are surmounted by a fine cupola clock tower. The effect of this fine building was notable. Since its opening in October, 1903, the society has experienced an increase of from £800 to £900 per week. In 1904 the increase rose to an average of nearly £1,500 per week, an increase of nearly £83,000 per year, and the increase goes on.

The Lardale Road and Belvedere branches are fine buildings, with handsome spiral clock-towers. Scotland has nothing finer to show. This may be owing to Scotch inspiration—seeing Mr. McLeod was the master-spirit of this remarkable society.

In 1885 the Society purchased the Bostall Farm, lying at the foot of Bostall Wood. In 1900 they bought the Bostall Estate. The houses erected for members are delightfully situated. During the two years—1903-4—they erected and sold 250 houses. But to name all the notable features of this society would be to write its history instead of a passing notice.

On the death of Mr. McLeod, he was succeeded by Mr. T. G. Arnold, in whose capacity his distinguished predecessor had great confidence. Under his direction all the departments continue to flourish. The great branches are ten in number, and are increasing.

**The Single Store in Herefordshire.**—Co-operative sowers need not lose heart, though they find only one spot of good soil in a county in which their seed will germinate. It appears that in 1886 a single seed took root in Hereford, Mr. J. Thomas, now president, being the chief sower. On no other place in the whole of Herefordshire had co-operative seed taken root. At Leominster, fourteen miles away, the soil was thought favourable, but no seed would germinate there. Nevertheless in Hereford a few true men have established a substantial store on an historic site in Widemarsh Street, where they do a trade of £350 a week. The Rev. C. P. Wilson, who is remembered with great respect by the Society, was an important friend to it, and for two or three years its president. Since the commencement of the society in 1886 it has paid its members £1,270 in interest and £5,000 in dividends.

**Some Jubilee Societies** are Rochdale, Leeds, Derby, Bingley, Oldham Equitable, Oldham Industrial, Halifax Industrial, and Littleborough.



## CHAPTER XLIII

## A SUGGESTIVE TABLE—CURIOUS FACTS AND FEATURES

THE table opposite, of 29 of the chief stores, shows that 21 do not understand that participation is a cardinal principle of Co-operation. The honourable exceptions are only eight.

**Curious Facts and Features.**—Very few sheet almanacs or balance sheets of stores give the date of commencement, while a private trader in 1905 will be careful to tell you that his business was "Established in 1904." Yet a store which has continuously grown for fifty years will leave the outside reader to suppose it is not five years old. Of course, the reader can infer, from the number of quarterly or half-yearly reports usually enumerated, the age of the society. But why leave it to inference?

Halifax, Lincoln, Bishop Auckland, and Huddersfield are the chief societies known to me who issue their balance sheets in coloured wrappers.

The movement is on the line of evolution, and societies which do little for education and nothing for employés, are likely in the near future to rectify these omissions.

The Aberdeen Society, which describes itself as a "Company of shareholders," makes a small award to Education, as Aberdeen is amply provided with day schools and night schools, but none in which co-operative education is given. Their favourite Lord Rector, Alexander Bain, would have told them differently had they asked him.

Mr. W. Hartley, the manager of the Bingley store, has written an intelligent Jubilee history of it, in which there are remarkable passages on co-operative principles and on the

Name of Society.	Age.	Number of Members.	Annual Profits.	Education.	Number of Employes.	Employes' Share of Profits.
	Years		£			
Aberdeen...	44	20,082	109,850	A small Grant	1,093	None
Barnsley British...	43	21,000	115,320	1 per cent. (£758)	665	None
Bingley ...	55	3,109	15,368	£130 Grant	95	None
Bishop Auckland	45	14,239	85,169	£14 4s. Grant	433	None
Blaydon-on-Tyne	46	8,213	48,059	3½ per cent. (£1,365)	240	None
Bolton ...	46	31,369	115,000	£3,000	316	£3,207 yearly average
Bradford ...	45	19,410	73,654	½ per cent. (£300)	592	None
Derby ...	55	18,676	56,875	£578	723	£1,063 yearly average
Edinburgh, St. Cuthbert's	46	32,227	288,666	£499 Grant	2,011	None
Gateshead-on-Tyne	44	12,347	66,422	None	440	None
Glasgow, St. George	35	16,108	63,000	2 per cent. (£1,267)	1,000	Same as Dividend, 10 per cent., £4,953
Halifax ...	54	10,691	46,481	£115 Grant	330	None
Hereford ...	19	990	6,270	£17 10s.	21	None
Huddersfield	45	13,108	57,700	1 per cent. (£570)	390	2½ per cent. in Drapery only
Leeds ...	58	49,340	226,000	¾ per cent. (£1,500)	1,932	None
Leicester ...	45	18,800	69,530	1¼ per cent. (£650)	350	£1,600 yearly average (1s. 3d. in the £)
Lincoln ...	44	10,677	19,391	£298 Grant	533	None
Littleborough	54	1,781	8,655	None	48	None
Manchester and Salford	46	16,521	46,561	£487 Grant	600	2½ per cent. net Profits
Newcastle-on-Tyne	44	19,031	78,664	One Shilling per cent.	700	None
Oldham (Industrial)	55	14,996	94,488	£2,000 Grant	525	None
Oldham (Equitable)	54	12,368	43,000	£1,260 Grant	284	None
Plymouth...	45	34,880	114,000	2½ per cent. (£2,460)	1,109	£3,200 yearly average
Rochdale (Equitable)	61	11,986	36,454	2½ per cent. (£769)	49	None
Stockton-on-Tees	40	10,901	36,700	½ per cent.	389	None
Stratford ...	45	15,109	41,008	1 per cent. (£400)	620	None
Sunderland	46	16,765	42,500	2½ per cent. (£818)	641	None
Wholesale (C.W.S.)	41	1,133 (Societies)	297,304	...	15,000	None
Woolwich	36	24,120	54,392	£1,032	949	£2,990

“Cruelty of the Credit System.” Bingley resembles Rochdale in its early difficulties, and in having a Toad Lane in the town.

I saw the Blaydon-on-Tyne store begin and grow, being a frequent visitor to the village in the earlier years of the store. It owed much to the advice and friendship of Joseph Cowen, jun., subsequently M.P. for Newcastle. Mr. W. Crooks, the store secretary, in an interesting letter, regrets that the workmen give no award to Labour. He is the first secretary who has deplored it. To their honour the Education Committee have held many meetings to induce members not to forfeit their own claim to equitable treatment by refusing it to their fellows.

From what I knew of Blaydon workmen, I should conclude they were the most likely of any workmen in England, from their good sense and good nature, to accord to those in their service, that share of profits at their disposal, which they all desired to receive at the hands of those who employed them. Had they set the example, it would have been followed by employers in whose service they were, and the income of thousands of workmen in their neighbourhood would have been increased for a generation past. If each member had been personally instructed in the equity of co-operation on joining the store, the state of things which true-minded members of their committee have in vain endeavoured to correct, would never have come to pass.

Newcastle-on-Tyne is the most notable Dark store. Until 1905, it gave nothing to Education. Now it has a rule under which it gives one shilling per cent., which on £78,000 realises but the miserly amount of £39. This society quotes, as testimony to its merits, words by Earl Morley, who distinctly praises it, “that the proceeds of industry are increased” by it, whereas the society does not “increase the proceeds of industry” by one penny. The directors quote also the “Encyclopædia Britannica,” which asserts that the “wealth [of the society] is distributed on the principles of equity.” But there is no equity where nothing is given to the workers who assist in furthering its welfare. The Newcastle Society further prints as one of their claims to public confidence and respect that it is engaged in “conciliating the

conflicting interests of the capitalist, the worker, and the purchaser." Yet during forty-four years it has not accorded sixpence to the worker, but has given everything to the consumer. Certainly the society is not impetuous in acting upon its principles of "equity."

No light so curious, ample, and instructive is thrown upon working-class character as is furnished by the study of "co-operators." The workmen of Newcastle-on-Tyne, in respect of intelligence and public spirit, are equal to any class in the United Kingdom. Yet where they have control of the money of their own order, they keep it in their own hands as capitalists do, and exclude their fellow-workmen from participation in the wealth jointly created. The democratic door of Co-operation is left open, and no check-taker is stationed there to see that those who enter have co-operative tickets. The public go in without any ticket at all. They are not co-operators who enter, but mere dividend-seekers, who cast votes for themselves alone, regardless of the honour of Co-operation, whose motto is, "Each for All."

Stratford has a great store, which began in 1860. For years it stood aloof from the Union of Societies, but being democratic in its constitution, more genial members came upon its committee, and the society grew with more rapidity than any other within the metropolitan area. It entertained the Congress in 1904. Its shops extend down two streets. To pass from window to window is like walking through a great market and emporium where all the products of Nature and manufacture are to be seen. The business of this great society commenced in 1860 in a barber's shop, and did business only on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Sunderland gives us a very able Chairman of the Central Education Committee—Mr. W. R. Rae—yet though the society has 16,000 members, who receive £42,500 of dividend yearly, they give nothing to 641 employés who help to make it.<sup>1</sup> Is there no connection between education and equity? The society has a Harvest Festival, at which, in 1904, the Rev. Francis Wood conducted the service, who spoke of the time when "human selfishness had not fenced off the

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to figures in the Table, as in other instances in this chapter.

land on every side, saying, 'This is mine and mine alone.'” Yet this is what the Sunderland Society has done during forty-six years. It has “fenced off” its dividends for the purchaser only, contemptuously or inconsiderately excluding the workers from any participation.

The business report bearing the words “Co-operative Society, St. George’s,” does not say in what city the store is situated, which assumes, on the part of the secretary, that no one outside Glasgow would care to know where the store is, which deserves to be known, as co-operators elsewhere would regard it with honour, seeing that it gives two per cent. to Education—£1,267—and accords to its employes £4,953, at the rate of 10 per cent., which exceeds Plymouth, the next society distinguished for its handsome award to Labour.

The balance sheet of the St. Cuthbert’s Society, Edinburgh, is the most analytical I have collected, but the society has no other merit. With £109,850 annual profit, it gives nothing to employes, of whom it has nearly 1,100. The Littleborough Society’s balance sheet excels in details, since it gives the financial position of its nearly 2,000 members.

The secretaries of chief societies ought to be enumerated in addition to those mentioned, since they display great administrative capacity, and have been my authorities for local and financial facts which they have enabled me to give.

Of the persons named elsewhere as members of the first Central Board at the London Congress of 1869—William Pare, Thomas Hughes, Edward Vansittart Neale, Anthony J. Mundella, Lloyd Jones, Joseph Woodin, William Allen, James Hole, Dr. Travis, Thomas Cheetham (Rochdale), Isaiah Lee (Oldham), James Borrowman (Glasgow), have since died.



# CHAPTER XLIV

## TWENTY-SEVEN CONGRESSES

ON page 566 are the names of the Presidents of Congress from 1869 to 1878. The following is a list of the Presidents from 1878 to 1905 :—

- 1879. Professor J. Stewart, Gloucester.
- 1880. Bishop of Durham, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
- 1881. Earl of Derby, Leeds.
- 1882. Right Hon. Lord Reay, Oxford.
- 1883. Right Hon. W. E. Baxter, M.P., Edinburgh.
- 1884. Right Hon. Earl of Shaftesbury, Derby.
- 1885. Mr. Lloyd Jones, Oldham.
- 1886. Right Hon. Earl of Morley, Plymouth.
- 1887. Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, Carlisle.
- 1888. Mr. Edward Vansittart Neale, Dewsbury.
- 1889. Professor A. Marshall, Ipswich.
- 1890. Earl of Rosebery, Glasgow.
- 1891. Mr. A. H. D. Acland, M.P., Lincoln.
- 1892. Mr. J. T. W. Mitchell, Rochdale.
- 1893. Mr. Joseph Clay, J.P., Bristol.
- 1894. Mr. Thomas Tweddell, J.P., F.R.G.S., Sunderland.
- 1895. Mr. Geo. Thomson, Huddersfield.
- 1896. Earl of Winchilsea, Woolwich.
- 1897. Mr. Wm. Maxwell, J.P., Perth.
- 1898. Dr. Creighton, Bishop of London, Peterborough.
- 1899. Mr. F. Hardern, J.P., Liverpool.
- 1900. Mr. W. H. Brown, Cardiff.
- 1901. Mr. J. Warwick, Middlesbrough.
- 1902. Mr. G. Hawkins, Exeter.
- 1903. Mr. J. Shillito, Doncaster.
- 1904. Mr. Edward Owen Greening, Stratford.
- 1905. Dr. Hans Müller, Paisley.

The first Congress report was edited by J. M. Ludlow, the second by Henry Pitman, the third, fourth, and fifth by the present writer. Those from 1874 to 1879 were edited by E. V. Neale. They were edited not in the sense of merely compiling and indexing the matter, but edited in the sense of interpreting the quality and nature of the proceedings, which

made the Congress report very valuable, both to members and the public. This form of editing was discontinued because a member of the Board objected to opinions sometimes expressed. Yet the opinion of so competent a commentator must always be of value, though some readers might dissent from it.

Each Congress report has its intrinsic interest. Of late years the quarto form has ceased, and the report now appears in a convenient volume, with many attractive illustrations. The reports extend from 1869 to 1905.

Reference has been made to an early series of Congresses of which ample reports, for those days, were published. But the reports began with the second Congress, held in 1830 ; but no record was known to exist of the first Congress. It has recently been brought to light that the first Congress was held in Manchester, May 26, 1827. The report was drawn up by William Pare. The principal members present were Robert Owen, Elijah Dixon, of Manchester (in the chair), Rev. Joseph Marriot, William Pare (Birmingham), J. Finch, and William Thompson, of Cork. These were all distinguished names in the early co-operative movement. The report was made on four large foolscap pages, closely printed, apparently for personal circulation. This is the report which has been so often inquired for, which no one has hitherto traced. There were known to be three Congresses. But which was the first Congress? In what town was it held? In what building was it held? Who attended it? What was the business done? No answer could be given to these questions, until I discovered the document amid the more than 2,000 letters in possession of the Owen Committee of Manchester, for many years in the possession of Mr. Pare, and were ultimately presented by his son-in-law, William Dixon Galpin, to myself.

**The End of Queenwood Hall.**—The letters "C. M." which appeared on the exterior of the hall were taken to indicate the Commencement of the Millennium. Certainly had Mr. Owen and his friends succeeded in building the new world, it had been well done. No cathedral was ever built so reverently as was Queenwood Hall. Hand-made nails, not machine-made, were used in the work out of sight. There

was nothing mean anywhere open or concealed. The great kitchen was wainscoted with mahogany half-way up the walls.

Queenwood Hall of so many noble associations, social and educational, was destroyed by fire in 1902; Mr. Charles Willmore, who had been its principal for many years, perished in it. Being fifty, he had for some time ceased active duty.

When Italy initials the magnificent Emporium Store it has erected in Milan, it will not need C. M. but C. C. C. (Commencement of Co-operative Commerce). In 1886 Signor Luigi Buffoli founded the Unione Co-operativa in Milan among railway men, which has since overrun all the regions round about. Buffoli adopted the English principle of Participation with Labour and Trade. It employs over three hundred workpeople, and accords them 10 per cent. for their Provident Fund. The Library and Education Department are well supported. Members and non-members receive the same amount of dividend<sup>1</sup>—a logical consistency, nowhere in force in England. It is the Prince of Stores. "It has a frontage of 300 feet, and 150 feet in depth. A vast corridor runs through the whole building. At one point there are three marble arches. Over these arches—gold mounted—are the names of Owen, Holyoake, and Neale."<sup>2</sup> Signor Buffoli has been the President since 1886—a man of real principle as well as of suburb initiative. "Storia," the beautifully illustrated history of the Unione Co-operativa of Milan has a passage deserving of a place in this "History." "Thanks," it says gratefully, "to the humble but energetic co-operator, Giovanni Rota, the first Co-operative Store was established outside Genoa, on the Rochdale System." At the time of the Rochdale Jubilee, Onorota Cassella suggested a halfpenny subscription with which to have struck a splendid gold medal, now one of the treasures of the Rochdale Society. It was a token of the friendship of the Milanese co-operators for those of Rochdale.

<sup>1</sup> *Co-operative News*, November 4, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Elsey's letter to Mr. J. C. Gray, October, 1905.

## CHAPTER XLV

## THE "CO-OPERATIVE NEWS"

THE *Co-operative News* commenced in 1871, and in 1872 it had attained a circulation of 15,000. Its original capital was £479, subscribed by forty-five societies and a few individuals. At a later stage the Newspaper Society was in debt £1,000. By the end of 1904 its weekly circulation had reached 71,000. It made a profit the first three months of £256. Capital is now £15,000, held by 324 societies, who represent a membership of 1,087,000, but who collectively take only 71,000 copies. Its Reserve Fund is £1,176. In addition, the land, buildings, and machinery, which cost £32,459, are now written down at £13,931.

A journal representing the co-operative movement, the official organ of all the societies, is a public convenience. One supreme referee for authority, counsel, information, and the free expression of the opinion of all members of the party, is a propagandist force. The *Co-operative News* is now in its thirty-sixth volume, and is a well printed, illustrated class journal. Being the organ of a selling movement, with more than a million customers, it ought to be included in the weekly purchases of every member. As 30,000 new members join the society annually, taking a copy of the paper might be made a condition with them. Any one joining a company which paid 10 per cent. on its shares would have to pay a premium. The average gain to a store member is 10 per cent. on his purchases. No premium is asked from him, and taking a penny paper (supplied at the stores)—worth more than a penny as papers go—would be readily assented to,

and the circulation of the *News* would amount to 100,000 in three months.

It requires great knowledge of widely-scattered and diversified local interests to edit such a journal. Mr. W. M. Bamford, as successfully as his father did before him, discharges the duties of Editor.

When the *Co-operative News* first began, a notice was published stating that post-office orders were to be made payable to the secretary, Mr. William Nuttall, Alexandra Park, Oldham.

A journal entitled the *Co-operator*, long conducted by Mr. Henry Pitman, which preceded the *Co-operative News*, gave reports, in Vol. I. (1860) of co-operative groups from sixteen places. In Vol. X. (1870) it gave reports of societies and meetings in 138 places, showing substantial increase in co-operative activity. There were doubtless other societies and meetings of which news never reached the *Co-operator*. Some reports appeared in it from South Australia. A society is mentioned in Adelaide having twenty-eight members. In Cincinnati, U.S.A., Co-operation is a subject of notice; from which the reader will learn the growing prevalence of societies in the constructive period.

The literature of co-operation will one day have considerable representation in the Press. The *News* management has lately added to its expository and popular publications the *Millgate Monthly*, an illustrated magazine which promises to find scope for that latent literary ability which must pervade so large a movement. Its appearance has proved a conspicuous success. No doubt practised and congenial pens will be found to contribute to its pages, both at home and abroad.



## CHAPTER XLVI

## THE CO-OPERATIVE UNION

THIS Union is a Representative Executive of the societies, having departments of Administration, Defence, and Instruction. It issued a Manual of Auditing and a Manual of Book-keeping. "Co-operative Book-keeping" is by Alfred Wood, A.C.A. It has an introduction by W. R. Rae, Chairman of the Central Education Committee, who is himself a public teacher of repute. Mr. Wood, who has genius for explaining things financial, begins with a clear definition of book-keeping, so that the reader understands from the very first the nature, scope, and uses of the financial art he is studying. Co-operative Book-keeping is of a special nature which Mr. Wood entirely understands.

A companion volume, entitled "A Manual of Auditing," has been compiled by Thomas Wood, R.J. Milburne, and H. R. Bailey; twice revised by the compilers in 1887 and 1899. Auditors are as physicians called in to see whether a financial patient is in good health, or in a critical condition. Ordinary unaudited book-keeping may present the familiar appearance of robust life. All the while there may be seeds of consumption or symptoms of fatal disease in the patient, unknown or unnoticed by those most concerned. A real intelligent audit reveals the secret malady if there be one, or certifies to the sound health of the society. A good auditor has in his mind the policy a society ought to pursue, to keep in financial health. I have been present when useful remarks offered by the auditor were frowned down, as being no part of his business to have an opinion outside his figures.

Societies will never have the full advantages of auditing until an auditor can give his free judgment of its financial affairs. An auditor is responsible to the public as well as to the society whose affairs he investigates. It is not enough when an auditor says, "I certify to the truth of the accounts put before me." Has he seen all the accounts? and does he know what to ask for? All the value of his audit lies there.

Book-keeping is a moral art which every man in business, however small, ought to master. The Bankruptcy Court is crowded by persons who have found their way there—not by dishonesty, but by ignorance of their own affairs.

The seat of the Union is a handsome structure erected some years ago, known as Union Buildings, Long Millgate, Manchester.

By the natural advantages of their position, having control of the funds of the movement, the Buying Society is able to control all the others. It has three times evinced its power in being able to resist the authority of Congress, which passed resolutions requesting it to put its workshops in a line with acknowledged co-operative principle. It has also been a wonder to foreign co-operators by what process of administration one society has come to control the other thousand, as it manifestly does. In the archives of the Musée Social is the first explanation given of this singular circumstance, for which the present writer received their large silver medal. The only English elucidation of the facts are to be found in an article in the *Fortnightly Review*, entitled "Higher Co-operation—Its Inner History," January 1902.

**The Honour of Societies.**—The United Board is responsible for the morality or consistency of the societies, so far as it may be in their power to cause information to be given to the members of such duty as the profession of co-operative principles implies. The belief that co-operative societies neither give nor accept credit has been a passport to the good opinion of the public. No committee would have destroyed this prestige, had they, on appointment, been required to declare their intention to prevent indebtedness among their members. Committees who allow it consider that giving credit is a mere convenience of trade, and do not know it is much more than that.

Not only is no inquiry made as to the co-operative knowledge of new members—no question is put as to the co-operative information possessed by members who are invested with the distinction and authority of committeemen, who are entrusted not only with the administration but the character of the society. The committees are the magistrates of the stores. Had they co-operative knowledge and conviction, participation—which is the strength and charm of Co-operation—would not be confined to those who are consumers and refused to those who are workers. Credit would not creep into the store, nor would co-operative education—upon which so much depends—be left to chance and charity, as is done in so many stores. No Congress paper is read upon the duties and qualifications of committeemen which, when officially sanctioned, could be put into the hands of store magistrates.

I take one instance, that of debt which has attained great dimensions, and committees have been accessories to it. Their guilt must be owing to lack of knowledge of their responsibilities, or from unfitness to have charge of the interests entrusted to them.

With the poorer classes the habit of indebtedness is ruin, loss of character, and of household control. The store permitting credit sinks to the level of the private trader, to whom we claim to be superior.

Credit is a crime in the eyes of Co-operation, and County Courts in every town protest against indebtedness. The store committee is, in a measure, responsible for the morals of members. To deliver the poor from the slavery of indebtedness was the earliest improvement Co-operation professed to bring about. A man in debt is owned by somebody else from whom he obtains food or clothing on credit. Stores profess neither to give credit nor accept it. The store that does is false to Co-operation. Such is not the worst. Honest-minded new members join the store to get free and keep free of debt. But they find the store keeps debt-books like other shopkeepers, then the new members fall back into the degradation of credit, and are demoralised by us. Mr. J. C. Gray, as a general secretary should, has with decision and foresight called attention to this subject. The Birmingham Society, into which the canker-worm of debt was eating its way, has taken the wise resolu-

tion of stamping it out. With wisdom which other societies might imitate, this society has reminded its members that it is within their power to draw upon their profits in the hands of the store for as much as will cover one week's purchases, by which they would free themselves from the necessity of any further debt.

Wisely did Dr. Johnson say, "All to whom want is terrible, upon whatever principle, ought to attain the salutary art of contracting expenses—for without economy none can be rich, and with it few can be poor."

**The Soul of the Store.**—From the first it was a point of great importance that the store should have a library of such books as its members should wish or require to read. All libraries were then under the control of the squire or the parson, who excluded all books they did not wish to be read. A store library was, therefore, a sign of intellectual independence. Of late years a society here and there has given or proposed to give its books to some public library. This might be a gain to the receivers, but a loss to the givers, and progressive books among them would soon cease to appear, and never be replaced. Then those who wish to read them must be supplicants, where they could formerly command. It seems, therefore, the duty of official leaders of societies to discourage the relinquishment or sale of libraries in the interest of members themselves.

"To add a library to a house is to give that house a soul." A good relevant library is not less the soul of a store, which without knowledge, is dead. It may be some expense to keep a library, and he who will not pay the rent of the place in which his soul may lodge, probably has a soul not worth lodging. If he has he will soon find himself out of doors, exposed to all the storms of ignorance. "Zeal" itself, "without relevant knowledge, is as fire without light." A library is a bank of thought, where members may draw ideas out who never had any to put in.

**Co-operative Education.**—The Union is the guardian and promoter of the education of the members of the movement. All wise stores authorise in their laws the provision of an education fund. Many excellent ideas never travel because there are no means to pay their fare. From the beginning it has always been the rule that capital and intelligence are two

trade charges, the inevitable conditions of its business progress. Every year the Union publishes an Educational Programme, increasing in comprehensiveness and importance. No other industrial movement ever had anything equal to it. Sugden said of Brougham, when he first became Lord Chancellor, that "if he knew a little of law he would know a little of everything." So it might be said that if this programme included co-operative education, nothing would be wanting.

Education is not co-operative because it is given by co-operators. The compilers of the programme do not appear conscious that there is a distinctive *co-operative* education, quite apart from that given by School Boards or University Extension classes. The early co-operative propaganda was engaged in giving the education of *Companionship*, which is unknown now. The art of association, which has no collected literature and no professors, is the very soul of the co-operative movement. Without the spirit of unity and active goodwill to others, Co-operation sinks into mere commercialism. Why should the friendly spirit exist? Co-operators should promote the good of others—but why should they do it? What are the motives for it, which are common to all persons irrespective of creeds, and which never fail when creeds vary or fade? What demeanour should officials maintain so as not to alienate members? Mere intellectual education is no surety for probity. The artistic accomplishments of Oscar Wilde did not make him a desirable companion. Energy, alertness, and business sagacity are often found in a rascal. Knowledge where the red sandstone strata lie, or when the next comet will appear, affords no clue to the conditions of probity, nor inspires any preference for ethical qualities.



## CHAPTER XLVII

## WHAT ARE CONGRESS QUESTIONS?

CONGRESSES have been thrown into confusion through the Chairman, or Standing Orders Committee, or the chief officials of the society, not being prepared to state what propositions brought forward were or were not out of order.

The question arises—What are the principles of Co-operation, and what are its obligation and policy? Co-operation professes primarily to enable working people, by means of self-help, in voluntary concert with others, to acquire business knowledge and improve their material condition.

Amid the various societies extant for promoting religious or political objects, Co-operation proposes to establish an organisation of workers who—asking nothing from the State save equality of opportunity—shall, by themselves and of themselves, by labour and commerce, better the fortunes of industry, always observing the rule of equity—ever seeking their own interests by means compatible with the interests of others.

Even this brief statement of co-operative principle and policy would enable any one to decide that any project or system which trusted to the State to accomplish it, could not officially be brought forward for Congress discussion. Such a proposal is socialistic, and Co-operators are not Socialists. Before the Congress could acquiesce in Socialist methods, the Congress would cease to be co-operative, since it would abandon its principle of self-help, and Co-operation could no longer appeal to the poorer class anywhere to improve their circumstances by self-effort, to which all the fortunes and successes of Co-operation are owing. Socialism dissolves Co-operation. Had the early co-operators looked to the State for aid, there would not

be to-day a single store doing business, and the millions of property possessed by co-operators would have no existence. Socialists have no more right to enter our Congress, and seek to pervert it to their own purposes, than co-operators would have to go into a Socialist or Collectivist assembly and propose to them to abandon their principles and methods and adopt ours. No person proposing the introduction of Socialist principles, or conniving at their introduction into our movement, can be a co-operator. If he professes to be one, he is betraying the cause he has undertaken to espouse. Socialism may be better than Co-operation, but it is not the same, and those who think it better should go over to it, and not pretend to be on the side of Co-operation when they are deserting it. Officers of Congress, finding compromising questions brought before them—questions not only distinct from Co-operation, but destructive of it—can have no hesitation in declaring them out of order.

The co-operative party being a distinctive body—neutral, but not antagonistic to any other, religious or political, but separate from them—it has to pursue its chosen course of social effort. It imposes no theological tenets on its members, nor exacts adhesion to any political platform. To take sides with any one creed would involve conflict with every other, for conscience is the most fiery, invincible, and belligerent of all human attributes. It is that instinct which fights for truth and personal sincerity, and—happily for progress—can never be bound by majorities. To take one side in politics would be a challenge to the other. To pledge the societies to one party would be as imprudent as to impose upon them one creed. It would embark Co-operation on a shoreless sea, without compass or chart, where rocks are known to abound. Motions which would cast the movement adrift from its moorings are surely out of order.

It is a great thing that a distinctive body of industrial co-operators—having recognition, influence, and wealth—should have grown up within the memory of living men. No wonder that another party, having no principle of self-effort and little to show in the way of success, should be desirous that the co-operative movement should take up theirs and run it for them. If we are to do this by one body, we should

have to do it by many more, and in a few years we should have all the chief movements in the world on our hands, and we should soon be like the poor gentleman in one of Ben Jonson's plays, who had "such tides of business that he had no time to be himself." The co-operative movement is not itself yet, and it will be time enough to become the handmaid of other movements when it has perfected its own.

In a democratic movement like Co-operation, every new member has an equal voice in its fortunes with those who have grown grey in its service and have acquired the wisdom of arduous experience. The new-comers may, as they often have done, arrest education, connive at indebtedness among the members, and imperil the honour and progress of the movement in many ways. Is no precaution to be taken against this? The doors of the movement are wide open and unguarded. Every one may enter who merely wants a dividend—knowing little and caring less for the higher ethical principles which have brought the movement its best friends and given it influence beyond any other industrial organisation. It is officially known that 30,000 new adherents every year pass through the portals of the movement, which is only like an arithmetical turnstile, counting the numbers, but having no check upon the quality of the throng. Thus the movement is dominated by recruits with competition in their bones, who give a competitive complexion to Co-operation.

The question of the status of the Co-operative Bank was one of great interest to Mr. Hughes, Mr. Ludlow, and Mr. Neale, who wrote pamphlets upon it. They wished its administration to be guided by what are known as "banking principles." What does a great body of new stores, which have arisen since those days, know of banking principles? Here is a topic of momentous interest for discussion.

What are the limits of commercialism?—

"Which, like Omnipotence,  
Mantles the movement with darkness  
Until right and wrong seem accidents,"

and men despair lest truth and equity be obscured by it. Here is another topic for a Congress paper, the discussion of which would elevate all who took part in it.

Lord Salisbury once asked, "Where does Municipalism end, and where does the State begin?" It is no less an important question in a social movement.

Co-operation has two principles, individualism and association. What are their limits? How far can we carry them? These and twenty other questions are undebated, unsettled, and knowledge of them are not yet attributes of the movement. It will be time enough to invite our members to enter upon other fields of enterprise when they are masters of their own.

## CHAPTER XLVIII

### PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION

DIRECT representation of Co-operation in Parliament is a question of natural interest to co-operators. Co-operation has had great representatives in the House of Commons—as Mr. John Stuart Mill, Mr. Walter Morrison, and Thomas Hughes. The two last members lost their seats through their known friendliness to Co-operation. A former Lord Derby, Mr. Bright, and Mr. Cobden, were steadfast in their friendship to it. Mr. Thomas Burt and Mr. F. Maddison have been foremost among trade unionists in espousing the cause.

As there is no interrogation of our new members as to what they know of Co-operation—as in the old days of the movement—a candidate may offer himself who may, when elected, represent something else than what co-operators expected. A Socialist candidate, of whom several have found their way to the platforms of the societies, would be likely to do this. A parliamentary representative should have political opinions of some kind, or the interest of the State would fare very badly in his hands. A candidate cannot be taken at random, and no questions asked. What is he to represent? Is it the commercial interests of the movement mainly, or its ethical principles? Co-operation stands for commercialism and morality. A member of Parliament should be a patriot, who cares for the interest of the State first and the pecuniary interests of his party second. If he has no political principles he has no business to be in Parliament at all. There are



already too many there who have no public principle whatever. Shelley has described one of them—

“He is no Whig—he is no Tory.  
No Deist and no Christian he.  
He is so subtle that to be nothing  
Is all his glory.”

Is the co-operative candidate to be one of these impartial knaves whom Cobden knew so well, who had no bias, not even towards the truth? Co-operators could not be expected to vote for such a candidate. Suppose he is a Tory. If so, he has as much right to be a candidate as a Liberal; but how can those co-operators who are Liberal vote for one who does not hold their principles, but will disparage and vote against them? For Liberal co-operators to vote for a Tory candidate because it would serve their trade interests, would be to desert their Liberal principles for their personal advantage. It would be that kind of baseness of which there is too much seen at every election.

Suppose our co-operative candidate to be a Liberal, the Tory members could not conscientiously vote for him without being guilty of that treachery to their convictions which it does not become co-operators to advise or encourage. There can be no direct representation except by a Liberal candidate where the Liberal co-operators in the constituency are sufficiently numerous to elect him—or where a Tory candidate being put forward, the Tory co-operators in the borough or district are in strength enough to elect him. These, alone, are the circumstances under which we can have direct representation. There is a dubious political party among working men who invite working men to vote for a candidate whether Liberal or Tory, if he will vote for their interest. But co-operators have not sunk to that level of indifference to principle, or treachery to the State.

Some co-operators are under the false impression, that because politics cannot be made a Congress question, that, therefore, co-operators should be indifferent to politics.

In the days when the Rochdale store began, two public questions were occupying the nation, the Repeal of the Corn Laws and Free Trade. Many leading co-operators were persuaded—as the Socialists are now—that their great scheme

would render any other reform unnecessary. They said the repeal of competition was more important than the repeal of the Corn Laws. Like the Chartists, who said that the Free Trade agitation was delaying the Charter, the co-operators thought the Charter delayed communism. Mr. G. A. Fleming, the editor of the *New Moral World*, took this course. Mr. Lloyd Jones moved resolutions on the same side. This caused among the public a distrust of Co-operation as a sinister movement, the members of which were personally against Fiscal and Political reform, or were conniving with opponents of them. A co-operator is for neutrality within the society, as regards religion and politics, but individually he should never cease to take sides in ecclesiastical and political affairs.

Politics, like piety, is a personal question, and every one should take a personal interest in it. That man makes a great mistake who thinks that because he is a social reformer in the co-operative body he should cease to be a political reformer as an individual. As an individual he ought to belong to that Church whose creed commends itself to his conscience, and be a member of that political party whose principles, in his judgment, are most conducive to the honour and welfare of the State. Because a man is a co-operator he does not cease to be a citizen or to be concerned in the freedom or prosperity of that great commonwealth, which is sometimes given the name of Empire. To abandon great national interests to the unchecked control of intriguers or adventurers, and render no aid to the advocates of the people, is a dangerous and criminal disregard of public duty. Tory and Liberal are more than mere party names. Tory represents the authority of the rich, and the subjection of the people. Liberal stands for reason and liberty.

## CHAPTER XLIX

## OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND INCIDENTS

**Industrial Exhibitions.**—Prince Albert may be regarded as the originator in Europe of Industrial Exhibitions as a public feature. The first experimental one was held in the Shakespeare Room, Birmingham, in 1839. I had charge of the assistant exhibitors. It was held at the Prince's instigation. It was thirty years later (1869) when the first Co-operative Exhibition was made at the first revived Congress in London. The Exhibition was small then, but by 1880 it became an indispensable feature of Congress. Where no room sufficiently large could be had in the Congress town, temporary halls have been erected for the purpose. Of late years the product of the Wholesale Society's workshops and those of the co-partnership manufactories have been exhibited in the same building—crowds attend, and the townspeople derive pleasure from it. The object of the promoters of the Exhibitions is to bring before the public, examples of co-operative handicraft which may be trusted to be of fair value. Lately articles of higher workmanship are included to suit the taste of more opulent purchasers. The Exhibitions are intended to raise the standard of skill among workers. Some Communist societies in America obtain on the market 30 per cent. more for their produce than other sellers. Even the tremulous name of Shakers does not deter purchasers, because their goods are known to be honest. Mr. E. O. Greening effected a brilliant extension of the Exhibition idea, by constituting annual Festivals of Labour, Flowers, and Song at the Crystal Palace. A mile of tables have been covered with flowers and fruit—a sight the world

has not seen elsewhere in the same splendour and extent. Mr. Henry Vivian now continues them.

At Hart Street, Bloomsbury, London, is the tailoring department of the Social Institute, originated by Mr. Greening in the former concert-room of the Princess's Theatre, Oxford Street, where I asked Mr. Greening to arrange a meeting, at which I introduced Mrs. Annie Besant, who addressed her first audience there. It was but following the example of Mr. Owen, who gave Edward Irving the hospitality of Gray's Inn Road Hall, to preach in, when his religious friends were hostile to him.

**An International Profit-sharing Congress.**—An International Congress Alliance has been established. It originated in a proposal made by M. de Boyve, at the Plymouth Congress of 1886. At the Rochdale Congress of 1892, Messrs. E. de Boyve, Charles Robert, E. V. Neale, E. O. Greening, T. Hughes, G. J. Holyoake, J. Greenwood, and other friends of profit-sharing, founded the Alliance. At the first Congress of the body held in London, the integrity of the Congress was changed by the admission to it of parties having alien objects, which converted the Congress into a commercial union—a good object in its way, but not participation. The Congress no longer—like the Musée Social of France—stood for participation. Mr. Henry W. Wolff is the present chairman of the new Trading Alliance, who has had repeated travels through Europe, which have enabled him more than any one else to promote the commercial aims of the Alliance. At the formation of the original Congress it was an object of Charles Robert and M. de Boyve to prevent the Association being perverted by the Socialists to their objects. The only expedient for preventing this was expelling from membership such persons, who were to have the right to appeal when the cumbersome proceedings of a trial took place. My proposal was, that each member, on admission, should sign a brief declaration of honour that, while he remained a member, he would neither promote, nor connive at, the perversion of the society from its cardinal objects, as such action would be held to terminate the membership of the individual. The honour of the member would be an effectual safeguard of the integrity of the Congress of Participation. Had this form of precau-

tion been adopted, the submergement of profit-sharing by the London Congress would not have taken place.

The last day of Congress saw an influx of voters from the North of England, with whom profit-sharing was not a principle. They superseded the organisation they found, and set up a new Alliance of All-sorts, in which profit-sharing was reduced to a feature, and commercialism established in its place, so that the international representation of profit-sharing ceased. A commercial alliance in the interest of societies had advantages, but those who wished to bring it about should have called a Congress for that purpose, and left the original Congress intact. Had my suggestion to Charles Robert been adopted, this *coup d'état* of commercialism would not have occurred. Ten years later (1905) the same thing was attempted at Paisley. Had it succeeded it would have destroyed the Co-operative Union. The ethics of honour between individuals is pretty well understood, but between societies—not so.

**An International Commercial Alliance.**—This alliance, which commenced in the manner described, was a commercial necessity in the nature of things and will no doubt usefully extend Distributive Co-operation in other countries. It has already held several Congresses consecutively, London, 1895 (if that is to be counted one of its Congresses); Paris, 1896; Delft, 1897; Paris, 1900 (a second time); Manchester, 1902; and Buda-Pesth, 1904. This new alliance will have to hold Congresses in America, Canada, and Australia. One of its objects is the “study of the true principles and best methods of profit-sharing and the association of labour with capital, including the remuneration of workmen.” Another object is “to hasten a system of profit-sharing” [improbable]. These objects authorise the introduction and advocacy of Co-partnership at the Congresses of the Commercial Alliance. One day the original profit-sharing Congresses will be revived, as the participation of labour in profit, like “John Brown’s soul, is marching on” in every nation.

**A Permanent Building Society.**—A general Building Society is a feature of recent years. It was established in London in 1884. Its prosperity and usefulness have grown during twenty-one years. Its roll of membership includes names of well-



known co-operative and trades unionist leaders. The society is registered under the Building Societies' Act, and not under the Industrial Provident Societies' Acts. It has a growing record of efficiency. Its secretary is Mr. Arthur Webb, and its offices are at 22, Red Lion Square, London, W.C. At first it seemed doubtful whether such a society could be established. When Mr. A. Webb became its secretary in 1895 its receipts amounted to £7,000 per annum. In 1905 they had reached £88,000. Its assets are now £230,000. The Society has 165 agents, mainly in co-operative societies. It deals in mortgages only of moderate amounts for better security. It holds 990 mortgages, distributed over thirty counties. The average amount of each mortgage is only £233, which shows that its progress is safeguarded by prudence. It has properties in Yorkshire, Cheshire, Warwick, Northumberland, Dorset, Durham, and Glamorgan. It has 183 mortgages in Essex, 176 in Middlesex, 158 in Surrey, 132 in Kent, 118 in Hampshire, and 50 in Cambridge.

**The Insurance Society.**—Equally, or more, entitled to notice is the Co-operative Insurance Society, whose offices are now Union Buildings, Long Millgate, Manchester, and whose secretary is Mr. James Odgers. The origin of the society dates from 1867, and its first registered office was at the Equitable Pioneers Stores, Toad Lane, Rochdale. It insures against fire, guarantees the honesty of employes in co-operative societies, insures the lives of members of co-operative societies, and also against death by accidents. The first fire policy was issued February, 1868. Its first fidelity guarantee was given in June, 1869. Its first life policy was issued in August, 1886. Its offices were removed from Rochdale to Manchester in 1871. No life policies are issued—which is a feature of other companies—entitling the holder to profits, which enable many persons to save who otherwise would not. Such policy-holders subscribe the profit in the higher rate they pay—but they save the money. Though in accordance with co-operative practice to afford this facility, it has never been done in this office.

The total premium income of this society for the first year (1869) and a half was £275. In 1904, £46,007. Funds in excess of paid-up capital in September, 1869, were £188. At the end of 1904, £141,210.

**Incidents.**—The fourth object of the Rochdale Pioneers—1844, was “the purchasing or renting an estate or estates of land, to be cultivated by the members who may be out of employment or whose labour may be badly remunerated.” This was the object of the “Unemployed Bill,” 1905. It took sixty years for the idea to travel from Rochdale to Westminster.

If the reader would understand the virgin enthusiasm of co-operators, which has oft recurred, and in some later generations will recur again, as new dreamers of a better state of society arise, let him read the following lines sung by the Owen party on board ship *en route* to New Harmony, Indiana, 1825 :

“Land of the West, we come to thee  
Far o'er the desert of the sea ;  
Under the white-winged canopy,  
Land of the West, we fly to thee ;  
Sick of the Old World's sophistry,  
Haste then across the dark, blue sea,  
Land of the West, we rush to thee !  
Home of the brave, soil of the free,—  
Huzza ! she rises o'er the sea.”

They did not find the land of the free out in the West, but they helped to make every land more free in social respects.

## CHAPTER L

## CO-PARTNERSHIP WITH LABOUR

"My idea is that the real characteristic of Co-operative Production might be stated in this way—that it was an endeavour to substitute an Industrial Republic for an Industrial Monarchy."—MR. GERALD BALFOUR, M.P., Crystal Palace, *August*, 1899.

**The Agricultural and Horticultural Association.**—Mr. Gerald Balfour's penetrating conception of Co-operative production covers the whole ground of Industrial Co-partnership.

The society which was earliest to adopt Participation principles was the Agricultural and Horticultural Association. This association, elsewhere mentioned, carried Co-operation into a field unoccupied by it before. In 1877 the business reached about £80,000, and its profits about £3,000 per year. The rules at that time limited the dividend on shares to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. In practice, with a few exceptions it paid only 5 per cent. Half the profits were paid to customers and 10 per cent. of the net profits went to the employés. The clerks had dividend on a separate footing. The total dividends paid to employés came to about 20 per cent. The sums paid to customers repaid them several times over all the capital they had contributed to establish the Association. In 1880 the business had obtained a turnover of over £100,000 of sales per year. Then came the great agricultural depression which largely affected the Association. Previously it had relied on its farming public. Then it commenced to develop the Horticultural side of its business, which restored its prosperity and profitableness. During the three years since 1901 the Association has made sales of £162,000, and net profits of £9,426. By consent of members the profits have been retained with the object of strengthening

the Association in case of recurring depression. New regulations as to the division of profits, give to the employés 25 per cent. of all the net profits. Customers still receive about 50 per cent., and the remainder goes to reserves or objects of public usefulness. The capital now amounts to £50,000, and when in full work it employs 250 people. The Association has over 3,000 members. Its headquarters are at 92, Long Acre, London, W.C., in the historic building once known as St. Martin's Hall, in which Prof. Maurice launched the Working Men's College and Charles Dickens gave his first reading. It is now the "One & All" seed warehouses and offices. Its works are still at Deptford. Mr. E. O. Greening, in his "Country in Town" (1905), says, "The Association is a mutual profit-sharing co-partnership, partly commercial, as far as it seeks to further the best interests of its customers and employés, but it is also a public body having educational aims and objects."

Mr. Greening has been its Managing Director since its commencement. The Association has published thirty-eight volumes of the *Agricultural Economist*, with illustrations equal to the best magazines.

**Labour Co-partnership Association.**—For seventeen years the principle of profit-sharing with labour had been dead in the official workshops of the movement. Capitalist workshops had been set up instead. In 1884 it was considered necessary for the credit of Co-operation to found a new association of Industrial Co-partnership—in the interest and elevation of labour—the main object of the Rochdale Pioneers. This was done at the Derby Congress of 1884. M. de Boyve, of Nîmes, E. Vansittart Neale, E. O. Greening, Joseph Greenwood, Abraham Greenwood, J. M. Ludlow, Thomas Hughes, and G. J. Holyoake were the chief promoters of the new association. Messrs. E. V. Neale, Lloyd Jones, E. O. Greening, Harold Cox, Bolton King, and E. W. Greening were the first executive. A few years later three singularly ardent and able adherents appeared in the movement. Henry Vivian, Thomas Blandford, and Aneurin Williams. Labour co-partnership was then an unknown name, and it involved some research to discover the few societies existing which came under that description. Mr. Henry Vivian, in his admirable paper on "Industrial

Democracy," gives the following figures showing the progress made in the establishment of societies based on Co-partnership principles, dealing with working class businesses in England.

				1903.	1904.
Societies at Work				120	120
<sup>1</sup> Capital	...	...	...	620,007	652,623
Trade	...	...	...	1,069,504	1,079,964
<sup>2</sup> Profits	...	...	...	47,834	40,591
Losses	...	...	...	2,463	5,269
Dividend on Wages	...	...	...	8,556	6,171

We were told, with Russian confidence, that the Port Arthur of Capitalism would never be taken. Anti-labour partisans told us we must go "outside the movement" to carry out our views. We would not go outside—that would be schism. This principle of Labour Co-partnership means that all those engaged shall share in the profit, capital, control, and responsibility. It seeks (1) in the co-operative movement to aid all forms of Co-partnership production; (2) in other businesses to induce employers and employed to adopt profit-sharing; (3) to encourage investment tending in the same direction.

Earl Grey presented a medal to some hundreds of Northern co-operators, whom he entertained at Howick, bearing the magic words:—

"From Slaves to Serfs,  
From Serfs to Hirelings,  
From Hirelings to Partners."

This is what the Federation of Co-partnership Societies aims at.

Co-operative Distribution leaves the man-slave, or serf, or hireling to his lot. It does nothing for him as a worker. Co-partnership does everything. The Christmas of 1903 had a Co-partnership celebration of which no precedent had ever been known in England. Every employé of the South Metropolitan Gas Company received an illuminated card containing the message:—

"Capital, Co-partnership, Labour. Christmas, 1903.—The directors wish you and those dear to you a very happy

<sup>1</sup> Shares, loans, and reserves.

<sup>2</sup> Including interest on shares but not on loans.



Christmas. The profit-sharing system, started in 1889, has advanced to Co-partnership in 1903. It is the desire of the directors that every employé should be a co-partner with them in the property, and a co-worker in promoting the prosperity of our Company. There are now 4,380 co-partners holding £114,865 of stock, of a market value of £136,115, who have also on deposit at interest £46,500, a grand total in the Company amounting to £182,615."

Co-partnership pays the public as well as the men. The South Metropolitan Gas Company announced a reduction of 2d. per 1,000 feet in its gas charges. This means that the people of South London are being supplied at 2s. 1d., while the people of North London, served by the Gas Light and Coke Company without Co-partnership, are compelled to pay 3s.

When philosophy can no longer deny facts, it explains them away by definitions, diving into bottomless pits of profundity, representing that if those engaged in labour were fully paid, there would be no profit. That is to say that if the worker was paid at first all due to him, he would have nothing further to claim. Thus the reader is landed on what the Irish preacher called a shoreless sea. It is because no state has existed in which the worker has had his due, that he seeks it in an allotment of profit—his only mode of obtaining it.<sup>1</sup>

Then another class of adversaries aver that the concession of profits is no incentive to labour. If wages augmented by profit-sharing means no increase of work, or thought, or care, or economy on the part of the worker, all who seek situations where higher salaries are paid are impostors. Higher wages are only offered as an inducement to higher service. But if this is not intended, it is fraudulent in those who seek or accept them.

It marks the advance in public opinion that the splendid verbiage of Carlyle in praise of labour sounds very hollow—where it is unaccompanied by any exhortation of duty on the part of the employer in seeing to the adequate remuneration of labour.

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx's theory of Capital is summed up in the proposition that if Labour was properly paid there would be no profit. The modern Socialist is against profit to the joy of capitalists and commercialists.

Some one praising Whistler's pictures as so very natural, the artistic egotist answered, "Yes! Nature is creeping up to me." Without egotism it may be said that industry is creeping towards Co-partnership.

The munificence of Count de Chambrun endowed with an income of £4,000 a year the Musée Social of Paris. This great Institute, situated at 5, Rue Las Cases, Paris, promotes in France the participation of the worker in the benefits of his industry. One day the Co-partnership Federation of Great Britain may unite with the Musée Social and with societies of participation in other continental cities and in America, and restore the International Congress of Participation. The English offices of the Labour Co-partnership Association are at 22, Red Lion Square, London, where No. 36 was the first seat of co-operative propagandism in 1836. *Labour Co-partnership* (of which eleven volumes have appeared) is the organ of the movement.

In the town of Leicester there are ten Co-partnership businesses, and in Kettering there are five. The reader will find these Co-partnership productive industries include cotton, linen, silk, wool, boots and shoes, leather, metal, hardware, wood-work, corn-milling, baking, building and quarrying, printing, and book-binding.

In a masterly statement of the status of Co-operation in Great Britain made by Mr. J. C. Gray in the *Arena* of 1905, it is shown that in the productive departments of the English and Scottish Wholesale 16,000 employés are engaged—that their sales amount to nearly £5,000,000, and their profits to more than £183,000. Production carried on by distributive societies employs 18,000 and the sales amount to £5,000,000, which shows, as Mr. Gray observes, that criticism often made "that Co-operation has been successful in distribution, but in production its efforts have not been commensurate," is not borne out by facts. Had the English Wholesale remained as founded—a Buying Society simply—the workshops would have been as numerous as the stores.

## CHAPTER LI

## CO-OPERATION SELF-DEFENSIVE INDIVIDUALISM

"England's greatest treasure and force is, not in her navy, nor in her wealth, but in that Individualism, which, no doubt, frequently exceeds its aim and turns angular and grotesque, but on the whole constitutes an asset, a force greater than that of any other Empire."—DR. EMIL REICH.

CO-OPERATION is self-defensive Individualism, made attractive by amity, strengthened by interest, and rendered effective by association. It has from the first appealed to self-help and inculcated self-dependence. Competition, although an unevadable law of Nature, is mitigated by man with the condition that the freedom of the individual shall be kept within limits of neither fettering nor harming others in the exercise of equal rights.

In the same manner it is a necessary condition of human progress that every form of association, co-operative or socialistic, voluntary or otherwise, shall refrain from neutralising, suppressing, or superseding those personal and individual rights upon which the welfare, the security, and self-defence of society depend.

The individual can do little save by concert with others. This co-operation he seeks by volunteering Co-partnership in the gains of all mutual undertakings.

Co-operation has a message to Labour. That is the reason of its being. Ah, Labour! there are people who have a heart so cold towards thee that an Arctic explorer would be frozen to death in his attempts to reach the Polar region of their sensibility. Labour! praised and plundered, the sole means of life, to which all progress is owing, by which everybody profits, and which few reward! Co-operation is thy sole

available path of independence. It puts here and now into the workers' hands the means to cancel their captivity. It waits for no future—its field of operation is the present. It needs no conversion of the world for the commencement of change—it needs but self-help and concert.

Co-operation is Co-partnership in the workshop and in the store. Co-partnership in production is now officially conceded a place side by side with co-operative distribution,<sup>1</sup> of which it is not the antagonist nor the rival, but the assertion of the original co-operative principle.

The essence of ethical Co-operation is participation. It is that which has caused the co-operative stores to exist, and were participation withdrawn they would die in a day. Unless the principle of the store is extended to the workshop, the workshop is not co-operative in the plain sense of the term. If "taxation without representation is tyranny," co-operation without participation is imposture, judged in the light of its essential principle.

Co-partnership in the workshop began earlier, goes further, and means more than co-operative distribution. The theory of Co-operation, based on the Co-partnership of individuals, will be new to members of later years unversed in the aims of the old Pioneers who made the movement. It therefore requires consideration to state the case, so as not to chill the susceptibilities of those who have never breathed the bracing upland air of higher Co-operation.

Sir Albert Rollit lately told us of a mayor who, on taking his seat on the bench for the first time, assured the bar that "during his year of office he would spare no effort to be neither partial nor impartial." My ambition is to be impartial, merely indicating the logical course a society must pursue which seeks to realise co-operative principles.

When the stores established a buying society participation was the soul of it, and for a few years this society accorded a share of profits to those in its employ. Then this rule was abandoned, and Co-operation was changed into a commercial movement. A democratic society which asks no ethical questions of, nor takes any pledges from, those who join it, keeps an open door through which pirates may enter and

<sup>1</sup> "Industrial Co-operation," published by the Co-operative Union, p. 20.

scuttle the ship, and officials were soon found doing it. Some never comprehended ethical Co-operation, but took it to be a new method of commercialism. Some were particularists, as were workers in Oldham mills who shared the profits of the concern. Some of them became shareholders in another profit-sharing mill. They showed willingness to receive it in the mill in which they worked, but always discovered "particular" reasons why it was impossible where they were the employers. That participation increased excellence in work, economy in material, diminished cost in supervision, and created pride in the workshop, which is the grace of labour—was disbelieved or disregarded. Every consideration gave way before the desire of gaining an immediate advantage at the expense of others. When workmen became directors, it was soon found they had no wish to see workmen of the class to which they belonged, on an equality with themselves. In the stores they did not attempt to take away the profit of the purchasers, to whom a hundred shops were open; whereas the workman had scant chance of another situation if he gave up the one he held. So the workman could be kept lean while the consumer was fed fat. Co-partnership was the beginning of equality which has no other sign, and only men of strong sense of right and strong sympathy with it cared to concede it. From 1864 to 1904, a period of forty years, no single director has ever uttered a word in favour of participation of profits in their workshops. The more astute saw that by retaining the profits of the workshop and sharing them with the stores it would conduce to business. Whether it was conducive to co-operative honour or fidelity to co-operative principles did not appear to concern them; as Mr. Mitchell, Chairman of the Wholesale, told the Parliamentary Committee, "it was not good business" to give heed to such considerations. That was capitalism, not Co-operation, which spoke then. There is this to be said in palliation. The private traders were militant adversaries, and it was a great temptation to prove our capacity to defy them on their own ground.

The Co-operative Congress, by its constitution, is the Parliament of the societies, and theoretically makes laws for all and exacts conformity to them. Three times this Congress has called upon the Buying Society to re-establish



profit-sharing in its workshops, and this single society has defied Congress; and at the same time it calls upon the societies to be "loyal to it," while it is disloyal to them. This is, as has been said, always a mystery to foreigners. The mystery would not so much matter did not the participation of profits disappear with it. The thing wanted is to have a right conception of Co-operation, which means individual effort in concert with others for the equitable advantage of all.

There are several kinds of Co-operation. There is Co-operation in the Church for ends many view—educationally, at least—with dismay. There is Co-operation in Parliament to keep the people from their rightful share in Government. There is Co-operation among war-contriving financiers, which made Mr. Ruskin say that "what he feared was—Co-operation among scoundrels." But that form of Co-operation originated by the followers of Robert Owen is ethical, which begins in self-help, and acts in concert with others for the common advantage. An individual is lost, save in the savage state, where he can kill those who have something he wants or who endeavour to take from him what he has possessed himself of. The co-operator is an individual who seeks his own advantage under conditions consistent with equal advantage of others. Co-operation is not intended to neutralise individual power, but to increase it by protecting it from competition to which, by acting against the interest of others, he would be exposed. The inspiration of self-effort and self-dependence is the primal object of Co-operation. Its principle is equality, its policy association.

If Co-partnership workshops were numerous it is conceivable they would need a wholesale buying society for themselves; but its functions would be to buy, not manufacture, though stores may do it. The benefits a purchasing society can confer on stores are great. Still, certain disadvantages of its manufacturing are to be taken into account. Where a buying society manufactures it prevents or discountenances stores setting up local workshops, whereby they could give employment to many of their members, which would develop local genius in manufactures. By establishing model workshops stores would create a higher order of co-operators, and exercise a new industrial influence around them. In every town

there are trades which supply local wants. One or more Co-partnership workshops among them would be an advantage to the members of the store and to the workmen of the town in which the store is situated.

The desire of a co-operative buying society is to supply to members pure consumable commodities or perfect articles of use. Therefore some have thought that by producing what their members require they can be sure of their quality. At the same time there are all about other producing firms, honest and capable, whose goods can be trusted, and a buying society, having funds at command, can stipulate for the best articles on the best terms. This is precisely what the Co-operative Wholesale was formed to do. It was expected that it would encourage the formation of Co-partnership manufacturing societies for providing farm produce for the consumption of their stores. Being the chief buyers, it could insist upon the honesty of edible articles and excellency in workmanship. Equitable conditions of labour, such as Co-partnership workshops establish, could be stipulated for, which would increase the popularity of its business.

If the Productive Federation had a central buying society which, from the hope or more gain, commenced the manufacture of what their members required of machines or materials, it would become a great competing power against their own societies. Local genius would be paralysed, local experience would be lost, and local enterprise would be checked. Besides, this central manufacturing association would, as a matter of business, prefer to supply no goods but its own, and would check all local undertakings, decrying and belittling them as unnecessary and futile. Here collectivism would kill co-operation, and frustrate the useful aims of self-helping labour. A buying society would give them unlimited choice in the markets of the world. One great manufacturing society would control them all, and each society would be a sort of tied house. The great manufacturing society would be more or less a trust, which is the abuse of the organisation of labour.

In comparing federal workshops to "tied houses" under one manufacturing society, the meaning is not that they are like public-houses held by brewers, tied by an external power, but

that they would be tied by their own cupidity. If their buying society manufactures machines used in the workshops of the federation, each workshop, if it consents to share the gains of manufacturing, takes the machines, and shuts itself out from selecting amid the new contrivances which the ingenuity of the world is continually producing. Another disadvantage of a buying society that also manufactures is, that it no sooner sees a local group of co-operators setting up in business and selling to federated societies than it itself may commence making the same article; or, when it cannot do that, it may appeal to the cupidity of the shareholders, who "for a mess of pottage" would sell their fellow-workers into hired servitude, extinguish co-partnership, and arrest their self-employing, self-helping education.

The advantages of manufacturing may be greater than the disadvantages of restricted choice in the market and frustrated action in the workshop; but it is well to understand what the disadvantages are.

Two things ought to be borne in mind. One is, what naturally put the idea of wholesale manufacturing into the minds of those who began it. It was the refusal of private wholesale dealers to sell goods to co-operative societies which compelled them in self-defence to provide the goods themselves. Second, the difficulty of obtaining commodities unadulterated, which they were pledged to supply pure to the stores, obliged them to undertake their production as far as possible, that they might be able to answer for their purity and genuineness. When the purchasing power of the buying society grows it acquires ascendancy in the markets, and can command pure edibles and sound articles of household use. At this point Mr. Vansittart Neale, who had Co-partnership in his blood, drew up a scheme by which the workshops of the buying society—like the Godin workshops of Guise and the Nelson works at Leclair, in America—could eventually pass into the possession and control of the workmen engaged in them.

The tendency of a wholesale manufacturing society to overlap the boundaries of individual life, and become engrossive in its operations wherever a path of gain is discerned, is not a vice peculiar to such an association, but the natural tendency of

every business concern, workshop, or store. Every society having the power of expansion inevitably covets further expansion, unless some limit of principle or prudence restrains it. When the Liberal Caucus was first established in Birmingham under Mr. Chamberlain, it having the power of dominating the town, did so until Conservatives were excluded from every office and were unable to hold a public meeting. Yet the minority of Conservatives were entitled to representation. Liberalism itself, without it, loses the advantage of counter-criticism. The dominancy which gives no one else a chance has reached a point at which it ought to halt, or it will one day be put back by revolt. Co-operation and Socialism alike need this policy of restraint.

The individualism of Co-operation alone keeps it from aggression. It alone prescribes the duty of promoting individual life, and securing to all groups of associated workers equal opportunities of attaining growth and character.

I am not a congress, nor a committee, nor a director prescribing the views others should hold—or the views they ought to take. I am merely a co-operative writer explaining ideas acquired in long converse with the movement. Any one may differ from me who sees reason for it. My industrial creed is short, but complete :

There is a destiny which makes us brothers ;  
None takes his way alone ;  
All that we send into the lives of others,  
Comes back into our own.<sup>1</sup>

There might have been some defence in 1864 for depriving the workshops of that participation which made them co-operative, from the need of money to promote expansion. Now the day of prosperity has come a return to the integrity or principle is possible and likely to occur. In the *Wheatsheaf* for February, 1905, an inspired organ, seven balance-sheets are given of seven manufacturing departments of the Wholesale Society, in which are employed 6,700 persons, the profit made by them amounting to £78,500. Taking these seven departments as a probable average of manufacturing profits, £78,500 are paid to the stores, which means about £12 taken from each

<sup>1</sup> Markham.



of those who labour in the workshop and given to the consumer in the store. If the consumers really understood this they would readily consent to £5 falling to the lot of those who labour, and be content with the remaining £7, to which they have no claim. They contribute nothing more for the cause than the pleasant exertion of indolent digestion. This limited remittance of the levy on labour would not hurt any member of a store, while it would give to labour a dignity of participation which no trade union has attempted to claim for it.

Societies will naturally manufacture or farm, but the invariable condition should be participation of profit with all employed—men, women, and young people.

The interest of the State, of progress, and of industry is the development of individuality and personality in men and women. Without self-help and self-trust the life of the poor is reduced to monotonous helplessness, servitude, and charity. Ethical co-operation seeks to prevent this by putting participation in the fruits of labour into the hands of all whose industry creates the wealth of the State and the profits of commerce. Co-operation furnishes reasons for amity and unity—amity which pledges itself to action consistent with the welfare of others; unity within the limits of practical efficiency. Branches should consist of such groups of adherents as are contiguous to the central society, whose life and management they can share and control, as is attempted in Leeds. Distant societies should be as planets in an independent orbit, federated with, but not subjugated by, a larger body, having only a borrowed, not a self-conscious, self-directed life.

Co-operation is not intended to submerge, but to increase, individual life by ensuring to every one participation in the emoluments and direction of his vocation. If the object of a party is the personal improvement of the community, all gain is loss which involves the sacrifice of individuality, self-action, manliness, and high character, the qualities expressed by the term "individuality."

Nationality is but the individuality of a race. "The sentiment," as Mr. George Wyndham told the students of the University of Glasgow, "is lofty, but it may harden into nationalism. Yet it is not on that account to be lightly rejected. Any nation—and therefore every nation within the



State—needs character, if only to redeem it from a featureless cosmopolitanism.” It is only by active individuality that the life of stores and workshops can save the co-operative movement from that “featureless monotony” which makes even goodness tiresome in every age. Centralisation is the doctrine of despots, and paralyses all who are under it.

Companies have their limits. That point is where they become trusts and directors begin to frustrate other companies likely to serve the public as well or better than themselves; or when, by buying up all concerns standing in their way, they compel the public to buy from them at whatever rate they think it prudent to levy. They thus acquire the power of fraud in the name of “business,” just as military marauders descend upon a country and plunder it in the name of war or Imperialism.

When stores were first commenced they became small centres of social life, in which were held conversaciones of purchasers. Each store had a news-room, which served for a little library, and a debating-chamber in which store questions and public affairs were discussed. The mission of Co-operation—if such an overworn word as “mission” may be used—is to advance enterprise and secure to industry its just reward. The true aim, therefore, of social pioneers was to make Co-operation the agent of society—not to attempt to make it the master manufacturer and merchant of the world. The store was an institution to which members were attracted by interest, and kept together by opportunities of personal improvement. Wherever a branch grows large enough it should be, as has been said, encouraged to become an independent store. Federation, not organisation, is the watchword of progress. The organisation of ideas in a community is the death of general intelligence, and the organisation of labour, carried to excess, takes charm, emulation, and hope out of industry. Civilisation is a protection against the competition of the savage; Co-operation is protection against the competition of civilisation. Co-operation may mitigate reckless competition, but does not destroy competition itself. Competition opens, and keeps open, the pathway of progress. The alternative of competition is monopoly, and monopoly means the opportunity of the unscrupulous and the plunder of the many.

It is no uncommon thing to find participation decried as a loss of money. Let us grant that it is, and that economy is everything. Why should we give dividends in the store? That is as much a loss of money as dividends given in workshops. The consumer spends only his money; the worker spends his life. The rank and file of store purchasers do nothing but buy. All in the workshop labour. What exclusive claim has the eater over the worker? If unlimited economic law is to prevail, collectivism is the thing. Why should we not have one State journal, and save the ten thousand editorships and their staffs which the public now pay for? Why should not a single physician prescribe for everybody, and save the cost of thousands of the faculty? Why should a hundred advertisers tell us every morning that each has a remedy that will cure everybody, and send you hundreds of lithographed "testimonials" of their truth? Why should not the issue of books be stopped in the name of economy? There are already more books than anybody reads, and more wisdom in the world than anybody practises. There are long-established formulas for arresting this profligate evil. If new books agree with those already extant, they are needless; if additional, they are unnecessary, as the market of wisdom is already overstocked. Parliamentary Government is a great expense. There are numerous political save-alls, who tell us, like Carlyle, that the "national palaver" is all waste, and that a Committee of Superior Persons, always to be picked up at the clubs, would manage things much better. Economy, conscientiously carried out, goes a long way. One economic Church would save all souls, and save the public loss of time in thinking, and save the expenses of State Churches and Nonconformity. The vast regions of food and dress admit of enormous reduction of expenditure. The collectivist of economic science would render life not worth living in a month, which would indeed save everything.

Pope said "the worst of madmen was a saint run mad"; but economic philosophers run more mad, unless good sense takes care of their principles. In Co-operation under economic ascendancy libraries would disappear, education would be abolished as uneconomic expenditure. Economic science unlimited would produce profligacy in misery. Men and women

would dress in drab, idols would be the only sculpture, no picture would be painted, song would be silent, no one would go abroad, and Society would consist of economic fools.

Everything has its limit. Sane economy signifies the carefulness of means in the production of a desirable result. Economy is a method of increasing the means of happiness ; when made an end it is waste. The equitable sharing of profits increases them. That is its business defence.

Those who would judge fairly the co-operative movement as we know it, must not forget that the first thing its promoters had to do was to make it commercially successful. Its principles might be lofty, with a dash of the millennium in them ; but would they pay ? That was the question everybody asked. The second generation of co-operators, therefore, mainly set themselves to prove that men might live by co-operative principles. They had to enter the fields of commerce and manufacture. If Co-operation appears somewhat to have lost itself in commercialism, forgetful that its object and recommendation was that of moralising trade, let it be remembered how it became oblivious of its nobler promise. Co-partnership is now the feature and the faith of the movement. So, taken as a whole, Co-operation is realising its industrial and ethical ideal. It may be imperfect and somewhere inconsistent ; but what system is not ? Even Christianity, with all the cherubim hovering over it, cannot be kept straight. Co-operation is merely human. Yet it has done great things, and will do more. It revealed, what Lassalle denied, the possibility of self-help to the people, as it had never been revealed before. It proved what few professed and fewer believed—that honesty in trade and commerce paid. It showed that men needed little from the State save equality of opportunity, and it is now endowing Labour with the right of property. It may be that Co-operation has made more promises than any other movement ; but it has fulfilled more promises than any other ever made.

I may wish to see Co-operation go farther and better realise its higher aims ; but, nevertheless, I value it for what it has done and is doing, and would withstand any who decry or belittle it. If it goes no further, I shall stand by it ; if it advances, I shall go with it.

Who is not sick of Carlyle's hollow praise of Labour echoed by the newspapers? "Blessed is he who has found his work. Let him ask no other blessedness." Not even the blessedness of being paid for it. No trade union nor collectivist society has proposed any resolution like the one brought forward by Mr. Walter Morrison, and passed unanimously by the Co-operative Congress of 1873, namely, "That it is of the essence of Co-operation to recognise the right of labour to a substantial share in the profits it creates."

A lava storm of hot denial burst upon us from the Vesuvius of Capitalism for saying this. The economic philosophers proved there was no such thing as profit. Other people know differently. "The merchant calls his surplus profit; the clergyman calls it stipend; the lawyer calls it fees; the banker calls it interest; the shareholder calls it dividend; the landlord calls it rent; the statesman calls it salary; royalty calls it grants."

Co-operation teaches the worker how to retain honest profit in his own hands at the present time, not in an unknown future. If he does not it may never be restored to him. What chance is there that Socialism, with all its noble aims, will be able to arrest the giant tendency of every party—capitalist and workman alike—of grasping at all that lies in their way, suffer who may? What can avert it, unless a nobler individuality can be cultivated? Where can be found a better class of workmen than the directors of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, yet they have taken from the workshops all the profits of labour? No society can be more democratic than the stores which appoint them. There is no remedy except by creating in the conscience of individual voters a sense of honour which shrinks from predatory profit. That was a great day in England when Granville Sharp obtained the decision that when the foot of a slave trod on English ground he was free. That is what Co-partnership Co-operation accomplishes for industry in the noble workshops it has established and which exists in some of the manufacturing stores. On their sacred ground the subjugation of the hired workman ceases, and the badge of his servitude falls from his neck, and he becomes a co-partner. How can this be done save by a proud individuality which puts principle first and profit second—which spurns, for its own gain, to limit

the equal opportunities of workers? No committee discovers new truth, or sees a new path of progress, or has intrepidity to advance upon it. It is the individual conscience that prompts the onwardness of the world and exalts the character of mankind. Therefore Co-operation is self-defensive Individualism, and seeks the alliance of all brave men and true men to stand up with it for amity and independence—for manliness and fairness. Conscience is the soul of progress, and conscience dwells in the individual.

The quality of the true co-operator may be seen in the noble words in which Mr. Gladstone described Dr. Dollinger. "He had," said Mr. Gladstone, "more than any man I have known, a historic spirit. His mind turned on the pole of truth and fact. He regarded error as falsehood. He told the truth when he knew it by instinct, regardless of all considerations to the contrary."

The aim of this History is to indicate the policy warranted by co-operative principle.



## APPENDIX

IF after this life is ended Death gave us an opportunity of writing an appendix to it, what omissions in the story of our life would be supplied, what acts of commission would be repaired ! An author is more fortunate who, on seeing his volume closed, finds some relevant parts of it have been omitted unavoidably—most convenient and disguising word which ought to be negligently—can supply them.

**Singular Abnegation of Employés.**—When a trade union or employés was proposed years ago Mr. Thomas Hughes thought such a union a scandal, as implying that workers needed to defend their interests against Co-operative Committees. He did not appear to see that a competitive policy, as respects labour, is strongly represented on most store committees. There is now a society called the “Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employés,” who have held fourteen annual meetings, but have not the word *participation* in their “objects.” They are continually appealed to by committees to take interest in Co-operation. But why should they when their employers take no co-operative interest in them ? As mere servants they take a servant’s interest in the business. The Union of bright smart servers do not appear to know that they are in the service of a body whose watchword is Participation, and that every one in that service is entitled to share in its benefits. How can they be enthusiasts about a system, the principle of which they do not understand ? If they did they would publish in their papers a list of the noble “Sunrise” societies, who give Co-operation its splendid name by their honourable consistency. This Union not only does

not do this, but gives its influence against its own order, and prevents its position being improved. Every year they go into co-operative halls, holding their meetings, saying to committees, "Look at us. We have no share of profits. We do not ask it. For fourteen years we have kept silence upon it. We have no ambition to be other than mere hired servers." They could do better for their Union than this. They have wit, moderation, and good sense. Are they not aware that when the voices are counted in favour of progress, their silence is construed into acquiescence with the forces against it?

**The Women's Guild.**—Another instance not less singular of obliviousness of the advantage of working for progress in the Co-operative movement is afforded in the Women's Co-operative Guild. It was fortunate in having for its foundress in 1883 Mrs. Mary Lawrenson, who saw clearly that if the mistress of the household might, by dealing at the Store, save 10 per cent. of expenditure, how much more important it was that the head of the household, from whom the income is derived, should obtain 10 per cent. upon his labour, which would also be derived by every member of the family employed in a profit-sharing establishment. Miss Greenwood, who in the earlier years of the Women's Guild was Vice-President, never kept silent upon this advantage, which appealed to the interest of the mistress of the house. Those who promoted the formation of the Guild depended upon this sentiment for advancing participation among the assistants in the store and all who were engaged in its workshops. Yet for years nothing has been heard of this question at their Congresses or Conferences. I wrote to one responsible for the administration of the Women's Guild to explain this peculiarity and indifference, who replied that participation was regarded as a mere method of business. It seems incredible that any lady of intelligence, as was the one to whom I wrote, could be unaware that participation was the essential principle of Co-operation.

**Thomas Blandford.**—A singular figure entered the co-operative movement subsequent to the appearance of this history in 1878. Blandford was a young Irishman with all the ardency of his race and of conspicuous self-devotion. He

wore himself out by his ceaseless exertions which left Co-operation a legacy of a great example. He was the originator of the Congress Shilling Fund, which at Paisley exceeded £70, and leaves in each place some permanent memorial of the visit of the Congress. His name is perpetuated among us by the institution of the travelling Blandford Scholarship.

**Distinguished Foreign Names.**—Foremost among the eminent names in other lands distinguished in Co-operation now living is M. Edouard de Boyve, of Nimes, who has for so many years conducted *L'Emancipation* of Paris. He has been also an inspirer in England of international participation in the benefits of labour. Next to him must be named Professor Charles Gide, distinguished for incessant and lucid advocacy of Co-operation. Mr. Henry W. Wolff is a Continental promulgator whom it is difficult to locate. Like Cobden he may be described as the international man of Co-operation. As a linguist, a traveller, and a journalist he has devoted his varied attainments to making Co-operation international.

It was Sig. Luzzatti, who, addressing Mr. Neale and myself at Bologna, said, "Co-operators were the explorers of humanity. They had discovered upon its great map the kingdom of Co-operation, which they had conquered and now occupy."

In America there is the Rev. Edward Everett Hale, D.D., the Prince of Co-operative writers, who first did for Co-operation in the United States what Harriet Martineau did for Political Economy in England—made it as readable as romance. Nicholas Gilman is an influential authority upon the subject. N. O. Nelson, who will always be counted American, although he is a Norwegian by nationality, will be remembered from his founding the profit-sharing city of Leclaire before-mentioned (p. 465). Long Buckby, Northampton, has built a "Holyoake Terrace," containing eighteen six-roomed houses, seventeen of which are owned by the occupiers. Ever since Wilkie Collins put "Holyoake Square" into "Basil," other towns have similar friendly memories.

**Courtesy of the King.**—It remains to be mentioned that on the Coronation of His Majesty, the operatives of the Havelock foot gear manufacturing society sent the request, transmitted by me to Lord Knollys, to be permitted to present a

specimen of their craftsmanship among the Coronation gifts of the day. By courtesy of Lord Knollys, permission was given, and a handsome example of their workmanship was duly received at Marlborough House. This was a Co-operative distinction peculiar to Labour Co-partnership.

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